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## M E D D

My father's deal with the fearsome Father Z has kept me alive- the only female left- in this shed for 15 years--today is my birthday. I am alive enough to do his will whenever he visits, kept strong enough to write his version of history- his victories and untouchable power- in his matte black book. He maintains power over the world, and imagines it through my hand as he pleases. I don't know how different the world was before the deal, because even before I could wield a pen my power was being abused. My father would grip my hand and trace out any request our Father Z made. Once I learned to draw and write on my own the weight of being the world's chained architect became solely mine, and now my father's appearances in this shed are rare. I don't blame him. I know he wishes he could still carry my burden. and I wonder if he sees aspects of a mother in my face. I think I must have had a mother, but I can't be sure.

My Brother visits every day. The prelude to his daily visit is a soft tap on my door at 3:42 pm. He always enters with a smile. It doesn't fit my circumstances as a captive, yet the familiarity of that positive face always makes me feel a twinge of happiness. I admire how he doesn't fear me, in fact he is the only reason I don't fear myself. He comes straight here after his daily issued school lessons and he steps into my ever evolving shed--it pulses with the evidence of my imagination- my drawings come to life.

The first thing I do when I tear his arms from my shoulders (a difficult feat due to the physical regulations for young men) is add color to his eyes. I drew them years ago on the northernmost wall when Father Z demanded colorblind-ness. Our fearsome leader was born without the ability to see color, and in his eyes no one should see the world in a different way. Rather than ask for color in his eyes, he demanded that the rest of the world be robbed of it. Sleep wouldn't come the night of that visit. I mourned for color- for the loss that men wouldn't remember losing. To find my peace of mind I drew vibrant sunset into the wall, just as i have done after fulfilling many of Father Z's demands. The warmth of the orange sun on my skin and the daring pink of the sky makes me feel okay.

When i get to the drawing of my brother's eyes I press in color after color to the intricate wall irises. He always takes a sudden inhale and then sighs and blinks at the now clear colors that drench my lonely shed. Every time, he feels he's seeing their vibrance for the first time, though they have always been there. I love seeing the enchantment of my world creep across his face. For years I have drawn companions to fill my captive cell. Yellow spotted jellyfish float by his head and gentle green glowing vines climb up each wall. I drew the floor into indestructible glass through which you can see gentle turbulent waves and the crowded creatures of tidepools. I love transforming this space into something else. It helps me forget i'm in a cell.

I often imagine how hard it must have been for my brother growing up. 2 years separate us in age, but we've always been linked in mind and heart. He's had to keep my existence a secret; sharing his knowledge of a female left alive would violate the delicate deal with Father Z and would mean a immediate sentenced extermination. I can't be a part of his life, trapped away with my power, and my father barely speaks--we are both so alone.

He has freckles. Not many, but they're there. A rusty brown, they match his hair. He said the other boys at school laugh about them, because to them it's a lab oversight. They see his freckles- a splatter of grey spots- as imperfections eradicated by the cloning populus process. But to us the freckles are a message across time. We like to dream that we had a mother and our mother had the same beautiful speckled skin. I'm scared that my hand wiped away my mother, and I think he wonders the same... but he would never say if that's true.

He is always shining- bursting with a fascination for life that The Outside can't cater to. Every time I bring a doodle to life, add a new creature to my mystical shed cell, i look to see the approval in his eyes.

But all of this is void.

Today 3:42 pm came and went.

It took my father an hour to lift his hand to my door. His eyes held nothing, no whisper of life , and his feet in their ragged boots seemed nailed to my slab doorstep--his left foot permanently turned in from a time when he was caught crying by our Father Z. Even in that span of time I needed more. Ladon would never be late. Especially on my birthday. He would never leave me alone. I wanted to erase the windows, draw a black hole in my floor and fall forever. But instead I gripped the length of my curls and wrapped the into a bun, stuck my pencil through it and opened the door.

He held out a brown package, and as I took it from his weak hands he met my eyes .

"M-M-morning. This m-morning. In the center of P-Pantheon." He struggled to breathe. He looked at his feet for a moment and attempted to turn his left foot towards me with no success before returning to my gaze.

“ It was you. Your face was everywhere. So b-beautiful. But... his punishment...e-extermin-”

And I closed the door.

Hours passed, and i'm not sure any air filtered through my lungs. I never sat, I never fell, I simply stayed and waited for Ladon's soft tap. Every moment I existed without my brother- my only friend- felt like a pin to my heart..

My eyes were raw from not blinking, but after a while they settled on the brown package still in my hands. On the top left corner were four letters-- M E D D. I could imagine him bent over this, wrapping it so carefully and writing out the letters of my name. I slowly tore away the tape holding it together- piece by piece.

A white book. Waxy cover. Thin in my hands.

On the first page was his last message to me.

**MEDD,  
Our mother's name was Hera.  
This is her book.  
I found it in father's desk.  
Perhaps it is time to seize your power-  
Rewrite history.  
Until then i will make the world see your face  
Ladon.**

Inside the white waxy cover is a story of sacrifice- a story of a brother and sister who never saw eye to eye. His heart- rigid, and he envied what her eyes saw and could create. Her quickness to forgive- a fatal mistake. A child, a deal, and hope for change. Inside is my past. And now it all makes sense.

I turned to an open page, pulled the pencil from my hair and began by adding an illustration--A meadow with daisies that gently sway. And among the daisies there is a woman and boy.

As they smile back out from the pages their freckles seem identical.