

A Monster In Time

By Kali Blackstorm

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To Alison,

Inevitably the greatest hero in any saga.

The night drags against willows, and I wonder how long I'll be left staring at this screen, throwing off blue hues into gray night. I punch out black text into empty space replying to hollow hearts. The hum of monitors faint compared to the buzzing of air conditioners, thrumming against windowsills. And you know? The coffee only gets more bitter the older you get.

It was so sweet when I was young, when I enjoyed the company of strangers and believed in their mistakes, but now? It pounds against my head, twisting in my stomach, leaving me to watch the fall again. I'm just patiently waiting for them to die again, to choke on secrets left on twisted tongues for far too long. Bludgeoning thoughts with empty canisters clattering against carts, you can't just buy time—but I guess you can gimmick a close second.

So tell me, what do you think when you see them clinging with bones to bare threads—Poor things? I mean, they are gray and tired and can barely remember the time. But if you ask me, their families are worse. Never coming to visit, unless on special occasions, or to yell at me. I guess that is one thing I do remember: pride talks far too loud. Yet it's nothing in the face of shrieking capital ripping egos apart, though I do suppose, that's just human nature.

Looking to the noises of traffic, I notice floral prints on walls fade while carpets pale to dreary white, but then again, death is terribly gray, isn't it? It's not the scarlet color you paint survivors to be, nor the fiery dance of life; it's the ash left behind. Death is mourning dew, I'd wager, while life is a hazy fog and time? Well, time?

It's the past you hide, the present you curse, and the future you pray too. Time is not a memory, it's much rather, your cursed secrets. Time is really a simple thing: a monster of entangled thoughts left to suffer your inactions.

I gaze at fluorescent lights throwing shadows into vacant halls, listening to crying, and yelling. Yet, I ignore their misery because I do suppose, eventually, someone will take care of them. I'm just here to make sure no one leaves, and no one enters. A gatekeeper. A protector.

The line in the sand. But it doesn't really matter, death can pass anytime he'd like, I can't even stop him. I can lock the doors when those annoying relatives come, I can throw away the key when they try to leave, hobbling with their canes, and I can listen to the screaming. But death?

Who am I to stop such a gentle face? —The living are so pestering. So irritating. So disgusting. Always demanding more. More. More! Like they own the world. It's revolting! Imagine believing that you are above death, that you can beckon him and abandon him with your blood, with your weapons, with your medicine. It's a losing battle time, time, time, always ticking by. But what is time when you play with it so? Changing dates in years, changing hours in months to dance with the sun. As if a celestial could control time, ridiculous! Time marches on no matter how you run from death.

The elderly here, desperately clinging to life, may irk me, but it's those I have the pleasure to work with that dig under my skin, like ticks. Gossip, and chatter, and idleness. Bitterness and hate and envy. Those who are unaware of the shadow I let through every night? Well, they can't see the gray, because I suppose they do detestably have so much time. Time, time. But then again it's not that much, is it? What's a year but a few hundred days? And how much can you really get done in a few hundred days when all you do is talk talk talk?

Glancing up from the screen with names and addresses and angry emails, I see a young face has crept in. Such a pretty boy, nothing more than a child in a nice striped shirt, blue shorts, and a gray hat. Brown hair pulling into eyes, blushing cheeks, and an iridescent smile, but then again, I see how those brown eyes twist and turn and ache.

“How are you today, Mirai?” Jay asks.