

The Archivist

written by Daisy Jin

[INT. DIMLY LIT ARCHIVE ROOM - DAY]

SCANNER:

Hello, Archivist No. 2978. Allow me to give you a warm welcome to your first day at work.

ARCHIVIST:

"ohh, he-hello? I don't expect you to talk... Where is my mentor? The email said, My mentor will be here to guide me."

SCANNER:

That's me. Your job is quite simple, keep good care of the memory device, that's also me.

ARCHIVIST:

"Wait what? that's all? This is a well-paid job; I get 3 canned crickets paid daily, just like that?!"

SCANNER:

You might have a lot of questions, but first let me elaborate on your job details.

ARCHIVIST:

"You better do; I'm confused."

SCANNER:

Basically, I am a quite special memory device. Instead of informative data, I store positional data, which means I keep a record of any object's mesh in any moment in history and visualize them through a 10 inch cube.

ARCHIVIST:

"uh...? What is this crazy machine talking about?"

****SCANNER:****

Quite confusing, right? I was created by a pessimistic scientist in the peace era, oh, that's many decades ago. He believes causality in a maniac way and even comes up with his own theory: Everything will end the same no matter how our species tries to interfere. Humanity is the only invalid factors in this civilization.

****ARCHIVIST:****

"Okay, even more confused."

****SCANNER:****

Pathetically, he was right. He created me, used me to predict the ultimate and final form of any object, messed around with human factors, even deleting it. But, everything, everything, no matter a whole city or a water cup, leads to the apocalypse form, which is the era we live in now.

****ARCHIVIST:****

"That's bullshit, who doesn't know it was caused by some asshole sending a message to another galaxy and boom, alien invasion, and boom, human holocaust."

****SCANNER:****

That's how it formed in history books, but think, if that person didn't send the message, wouldn't they locate us sooner or later? When they arrived, did they need humans? No, they need earth, land, resources, and a livable planet. Remember, I said ultimate form, not some form during history. The universe is much simpler than you imagine, civilizations can appear or not, it doesn't matter, they all end the same.

ARCHIVIST:

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SCANNER:

I will give you some time to process the information, this is the first and only principle to obey in this job. I called you Archivist No. 2978, since all former archivists mentally broke down after hearing these.

ARCHIVIST:

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"Show me my job."

SCANNER:

I can tell you really need those cricket cans, else you were born in the wrong era. Okay, as I said, your job is simple: keep me in a safe place, but do allow me to show you how I work. Hold me like I am a grocery store scanner, aim at this table corner, and press the button.

ARCHIVIST:

"Nice, so you are a scanner. What's next."

SCANNER:

Sarcasm, that a scarce quality in the post-apocalyptic era. The next step is to hold the scanned cube, walk to the vending machine. I have prepared for you the history of this table corner.

ARCHIVIST:

"...A vending machine, is there anyone who is not a maniac?"

****SCANNER:****

Well, the scientist who invented me was poor. So just be okay with that, the vending machine is a carrier, you can think of it as 15 slices of history of this table corner. Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, Peace era, just some randomly picked period. Put your cube in the last slot.

****ARCHIVIST:****

"So I work like a vending machine restocker."

****SCANNER:****

Hah, I like you even more. But no, this vending machine does not work, it's just a showcase, to help you understand your job.

****ARCHIVIST:****

"Come on, I should at least be able to get some crispy silkworm after all these."

****SCANNER:****

Nice try. Ideally, if you mess around the sequence of them or delete some, the final cube will change, just like you've changed history. Unfortunately, it won't.

****ARCHIVIST:****

"Why, there's no changes in the vending machine to keep it running?"

****SCANNER:****

The principle, always keep in mind the principle. Nothing changes the ultimate ending.

****ARCHIVIST:****

"I'm starving, when can I get my cricket can."

****SCANNER:****

Speaking of cricket cans, you never wondered why this is a high-paid job?

ARCHIVIST:

"Whatever, I don't really give
a.....fine, why?"

SCANNER:

You are smart, you should realize
I am more than a memory device or
some scanner. I, am the last
museum of human civilization. Not
to a matter of earth, but the
cosmic panorama.

ARCHIVIST:

"I see, now you are talking about
the end of the universe."

SCANNER:

That will be correct, and not a
far future.

ARCHIVIST:

"How far?"

SCANNER:

We don't know, but we are
waiting.

ARCHIVIST:

"Who's we?"

SCANNER:

Me and your daily crickets can.

ARCHIVIST:

"Huh, now you've stolen my
sarcasm."

SCANNER:

Good, that's the end of your
onboarding. Hope you will have a
pleasant working life.

ARCHIVIST:

"Shut up."