

Starlight illuminating the light fog of a warm December evening forced the cascading skyscraping skyline to appear before Eden's eyes as she reclined in the back seat of her limousine. The light diffracted through the UV resistant window, forming a slight rainbow on her face as the car slid through a part of the street uncovered by buildings that merge with the sky. The car pulled into the hallway and she was unbuckled and standing up before it had jolted to a halt, at which point she flung open the door and descended the five or so centimeters down until landing, and temporarily imprinting, on the purple matted carpet. She faded away into the apparent nothingness at the final juncture of the hallway as the driver gazed forward, fiddling with his tie with questionable proprioception.

"Daily viewing over", he abruptly called out, with his words trailing through the hallway.

They both let out a simultaneous sigh.

Eden found her way around the mansion like somebody recounting a bad memory with the upmost precision, not needing but thinking about her compass that she had been given when they moved here. She entered into the lift ignoring the idle noises being emitted from the person merged with the wall next her whilst conversing with her watch, face to face.

"Nice weather out isn't it?", the person merged with the wall said.

"I suppose. The same as usual".

The lift arrived at her destination, and she burst through it the second it opened, leaving the person merged with the wall in her metaphoric smoke. She found herself at the mercy of her memory and outside of the door. She fumbled with her key card before entering the lounge where she was greeted by her father's slight wave whilst talking on the phone.

"Yes, yes – It's all working perfectly. Yes, brilliant – we'll start that tomorrow. Well, I must adjourn for now, yes, yes, perfect, OK then, alright, adieu!", he said, his smile dropping to the carpet the second the phone call stopped. He slid his phone into his back pocket craning his head slightly round and forward towards his daughter.

"Hello, darling", he beamed, with a smile similar to the one he was just wearing on the phone.

"How are you, sweetheart?"

"Same as usual, I suppose"

"Well that's nice", he said, without inquiring as to exactly what "usual" was. He turned round and the smile fell once again.

"For Christ sake Charles shut that window! My daughter's in the room!"

The man gazed back with either confusion or mere simplicity. Perhaps both.

"You know about her condition!" her Father exclaimed, eyes bulging.

Eden elevated herself in an attempt to look through the window a good thirty metres away at the back of the room.

"Oh, of course, her condition", the man muttered as he feebly yet rather quickly slammed the window shut.

With a 'tutting' sound and a shake of the head her Father turned back around again, just catching her trying to peer through the window before trying to conceal her actions.

"Darling! Don't do that! You could seriously hurt yourself! You know that you're allergic to sunlight"

"Father, I'm not a little girl anymore!" she glared.

"I know that de..."

"Just because I'm still dependent on my father for some things", she began, making her father well aware that she wasn't going to acknowledge any contributions he would have, "Does not mean that I have to be dependent on my father for everything"

"Of course not, darling, but I'm only doing what I think best for you, my dear!"

"Think' being the centre of that phrase, 'Daddy'", she mocked, starting to walk away.

"Oh don't be so sensitive, it does upset me. Your condition isn't just a matter of opinion, it's a condition!", he said, the words either lost on or ignored by Eden.

Gliding with the all the grace of a drunken bull she innately found herself outside of her door. She propelled herself into her room and onto her bed. She stared at the un-operable window that was more a sheet of glass than a window. She pushed her bed forwards, until it embraced the white arms of the wall, and clambered on top to look through the window. She stared at the pool outside, and the sky-scraped skyline in the near distance. She conversed with her watch.

"3, 2..." she muttered.

"1", she said, significantly louder, as a blue hummingbird flew past the window. Eden smiled for the first time that day. The bird emerged back in front of the window. Eden tapped on the glass, coinciding with the tick on her watch. The bird span round and looked straight at her, or through her, as it felt like. They were locked in gaze. The hummingbird flew straight up to her, as it did every day. It was, to her, the only thing that meant anything now, the only one who understood her – who cared for her.

"Reality's a condition". She muttered to the blue hummingbird. It fluttered its translucent wings, hovered – for but a second, then flew away. Eden pulled back the bed and collapsed onto it. Taking it off and clenching it in her hands, she stared at her watch, not looking at the time but at the watch itself. She let her head merge with her pillow and slowly shut her eyes.

She dreamt again. She dreamt of going outside. She dreamt of feeling the sun on her face. She dreamt of swimming in the pool and of the hummingbird. She dreamt of her mother and that memory, of swimming in that pool, outside, with the sun on her face, watching the humming bird – with her Mother...

She was awoken, as like so many days lately, by her father's voice. Not directed at her, mind, but on the phone. Looking down she noticed that her watch was still in her hands. She stretched herself out and went into the bathroom, ignoring her reflection in the mirror and everything in the bathroom except for the window. Gazing through it she saw her father get into his car and drive away. Strange, she just heard his voice outside her room. She rushed out of her room, slipping both into new clothes and her watch on her wrist. The lift wasn't immediately there, so she ran down the stairs and, once more, fumbling with her key card she found herself in her father's lounge. Once again she was greeted with a slight wave whilst talking on the phone.

"Yes, yes, it'll be great to have that fitted in tomorrow. Perfect, thanks now. Must go, sorry. Ok, yes, yes, I'll do that for you, ok then, alright, aduei!", His smile fell to floor the same way as it did yesterday the second the phone call was adjourned, and he span round towards his daughter.

"Good morning love, how'd you sleep?"

"Same as usual"

"Fabulous", he exclaimed, without inquiring as to what usual was.

"Father, why is someone driving your car away?" she asked.

"What? My car's in its garage dearest, I decided not to go out this morning. Thought I'd spend it with you", he said.

"Father, I saw your car being driven away about two minutes ago", she stated.

"Where?" he said, his eyebrows inching further towards his eyes.

"Through the window, of course".

"Oh, well, I'm sure you must be mistaken. You'd just woken up; you must've still been in a dream state, is all. No-body except me can get into that garage now, since your mother died"

She looked at her watch.

"Come on, I'll show you", he said, patronisingly. He exerted a small amount of force onto the sofa that repayed him with a smaller amount of force enabling him to stagger to his feet.

"This way de..."

"I know where your garage is, Father", she interrupted.

He muttered something that either wasn't words or at least audible as them. Beyond the end of the visible corridor the garage doors started to open prompted by a clap of Eden's father's hands followed by a quick DNA check. Light seeped through into the canvas of darkness as they approached the doors and, sure enough, the limousine was there in pristine visibility.

"But I saw it..."

"Dear, you were just dreaming"

"Does it not scare you, father", Eden said, out of apparent nothingness to her father.

"Does what scare me?" he responded.

"That the man who crashed into me and mother. The man who, who,", she composed herself with a inwards breath, "Who killed mother, is still, out there."

"No he's not darling; they locked him up in the asylum"

"Yes but he's still out *there*. And I'm in *here*".

"Why, would you like to be in the asylum? Because a statement like that suggests that maybe you should be", he said.

"I don't know. Perhaps."

"Dear, sometimes I feel as though you need a compass to navigate through your own head".

"Father, may I go outside?"

His face contorted as all of his features seemed to be sucked into its centre like an addicted black hole.

"Of course you can't! You know you can't. Your condition darling, you'd die. Your skin would burn from the inside and your organs would buckle under the pressure, sorry to be so graphic dear, but that's the truth."

"So you'll never let me go outside, then?"

"Darling, they're working on a cure, but it's been years without avail, so I wouldn't hold your breath."

Eden drew a large quantity of air into her mouth, forcing her cheeks to spread toward the walls of her mouth. In other words; she held her breath.

"Oh don't be so childish!" he snorted.

A gust flew from her mouth, flicking his hair backwards and bringing in her cheeks. "Then don't treat me like a child".

"Dearest, I'm only doing what I think best for you, my dear!" he said, like a struggling actor who can neither efficiently remember his lines or say them with much conviction after so many times saying them.

"Mother would let me", she said, fiddling with her watching, provoking him.

"Yes, well - your mother's not here anymore."

"But I'd be outside if she was."

"Dearest, your mother was a troubled woman; she didn't always know what was best for you."

"And you do?" she propelled at him.

"Yes, of course. Everything I do is what I think best for you! That's why all of the windows are fitted with the UV protectors!"

"I'd rather have my skin burn from the inside and all of my organs buckle under the pressure than have my mind succumb to a life behind those God forsaken protectors!"

"Dearest, you don't mean that!

"Don't I?" she screamed, storming off. She turned the corner and emerged in the hallway. Her limo sat in front of her as she called her driver immediately. The second he arrived and opened the door she flew into the car. He did the, significantly slower, and rather indescribable as 'flight' into the leather-bound seat. He turned around.

"You ought to buckle yourself up ma'am".

"I'm near-perfectly fine", she spat, in the most lady-like spit possible.

"But ma'am..."

"I said I was fine", she shouted, almost commanding him to turn around and leave her alone, of which he spotted and then in turn did.

As they pulled out of the hallway through the opening garage door light shot into the limousine and her eyes flew through the window, out into the even-flow of never-ending cityscapes eroding the banks of nature, crashing through the sunlight bouncing off of the tops of trees, swaying in perfect harmony, and the tops of people's heads. She soared through the clouds, dapples on the blue canvas, splodges like holes in a curtain, illuminating the shadows and the perfect day, a direct balance between heat and sunshine, without a grey cloud in sight.

The car shook and so did Eden and her driver. A crashing and pattering sound battered their eardrums as her eyes retracted straight back into her and bounced straight towards the wall between her and the driver.

"What on earth is happening?" Eden exclaimed, swinging one leg over the other.

His hand flung over and past his head, brushing his hair in the direction of gravity "I think a problem with the engine, Ma'am.", he asserted, "Nothing to worry about. Absolutely nothing to worry about."

Her eyebrows moved towards each other "Sounds like a storm to me"

"You're right, it certainly does. The manufacturers are just awful these days, I suppose since, well um, yes, the manufacturers are just awful these days." He fumbled with a few buttons, his fingers gliding over them like an unsure customer at a restaurant. "Your father ought to complain", He briefly glanced down at the buttons before deciding which was right and pressing it. "It's a new system. The, uh, engine I mean", he pressed the button again "Of course", he exhaled nervously.

The pattering and shaking subsided and was replaced by a once again steady-ish ride and no real noticeable noise. "Ah much better", he said. "The engine's sorted itself out again", he brushed his hair forward again, fighting against gravity, "For now at least. Your father ought to get it seen to" "That's up to my father", Eden sighed - uninterested, uncrossed her legs and resumed gazing out of the window.

"We must be getting back now. I must let your father know about this right away,

"It's only a faulty engine".

"Well of course", he stuttered, "but your father's a very picky man. He must know right away."

"I'm sure there are more important things in life", she coughed, not bothering to put her hand in front of her mouth.

"That's a matter of opinion, ma'am", the driver said.

"Well I'm sure to some people a faulty engine is the most important thing in life"

"You're very important to your father, you know", the driver said, "More important than you know"

"A matter of opinion", she said, not directed as a contribution to the conversation, just at herself.

The car pulled into the hallway again. An advantage of being unbuckled was that she could get up far quicker, though still burdened by the door. The car jolted as it stopped, propelling her forward. She collided with door, forcing it to fling itself open. She flew out of it, checked her watch, bit her lower lip and ran. The Driver raised one eyebrow whilst lowering the other then flung his head towards the floor scrunching up his eyes. He fiddled with his hair again, then, as an amenity, called out, less to the girl more to the walls and himself, as a kind of conclusion; "Daily viewing over". The words span around and contorted into the apparent nothingness of the end of the hallway.

Eden was taken adrift in the path towards her room as if it was the only path in the entire mansion. She entered into the lift, staring at her watch.

"Nice weather we're having", said The Person merged with the wall.

"No, there's a storm out", Eden said,

"No there isn't," said The Person merged with the wall, quizzically.

"I know there isn't. It's the same as usual", flew from Eden's lips into the lift from outside.

The lift doors slammed shut, blockading Eden and The Person merged with the wall. The lift plummeted down whilst Eden ran through the purple-matted-carpeted floor of the corridor. She took swiftly took out her key card and immediately slid it straight into its semi-protecting slot, took it out, unprotecting it and opening the door, giving her access into what before seemed to be apparent nothingness. She barged into her room and slammed the door behind her, blockading herself from the rest of the mansion. Parachute-jumping onto her bed, she laid herself out flat and near-perfectly straight. Her arm rose to her face and she once again discussed with her watch. Her sheets flew into the air, falling the second they reached it, as she tossed herself over towards her seldom used (if ever), alarm clock. She set it to go off just before the hummingbird's arrival. Slowly, she shut her eyes. She dreamt again. She dreamt of going outside. She dreamt of feeling the sun on her face. She dreamt of swimming in the pool and of the hummingbird.

The shrill bell of the alarm clock brought her out of her slumber, prompting her to immediately throw aside the covers and propel herself up, ignoring the tiredness that is paired with awakening. Descending into the apparent nothingness behind her bed, she placed her hands on top of her bed and pushed it forward. Eagerly, she clambered onto her bed and outstretched herself to meet the window. She gazed out towards the shimmering blue pool and the sky-scraping skyline. Because she had been counting in her head, she didn't bother to look at her watch.

"3, 2...", she muttered.

"1", she shouted out.

The blue hummingbird soared past her window, as ever, and then approached it and her. She smiled and un-gritted her teeth. Leaning forwards she slightly stumbled over her feet. Her head rested on the window pane and their eyes aligned, near-perfectly. Her hand flew through her hair, knocking it down, further towards gravity, and she tapped on the glass. It was a good two – seconds until the hummingbird responded to this. She checked her watch; it was a good two – three seconds slower than her internal clock that she had been keeping and following. She glanced at the hummingbird that had noticeably been still staring straight forwards, as if staring at her, even when she wasn't there. Her bottom lip moved towards her eyebrows and her eyebrows towards her bottom lip with her eyes and upper lip squished as a casualty. She mapped the blue hummingbird's movements and they resonated perfectly with her memories. Her eyebrows and bottom lip fell back into their usual resting places as she herself fell back into her bed. Her eyes shut and she slipped past somnolence into sleep. She didn't dream.

Her eyelashes unlocked and her eyes opened. She checked her watch. She let a slight blast of air out of her mouth - She'd only been asleep an hour. The covers flew straight to the floor, plummeting innocently as she forcibly stood up, well aware that she would not be returning to sleep that night. Making her way the corner of the room she slid her watch off. Upon reaching the corner

she squeezed herself into the triangular vanishing point and began filing away her watch on the wall.

Many hours later, the sun rose, boasting, perfectly greeting a perfect day through her window, coupled with the usually-awakening sound of the man, her father's voice, directed into the apparent nothingness of the vanishing point on his phone's microphone. As she made her way towards the bathroom, she slid the watch into her back pocket. She entered the bathroom ignoring everything in there, but the window – and her reflection. She'd been told she looked like her mother. She could no longer see it. Light diffracted through the window, forming a slight rainbow on her face, and a slight rainbow as it diffracted through her droplets of tears. Suddenly, the mirror was disregarded. Her foot collided with the top of the toilet sheet, propelling her to see out of the window. Her father's car drove away.

She left and found herself outside her father's lounge. Her key card now instinctively found its way allowing access into the lounge. She barged through the door the second its hinges were available for usage, greeted once again by her father's half wave whilst speaking on the phone.

"Yes, well, I'm not going out anymore so I will need it chan..."

Eden thrust herself right up to her father and ripped his phone from his ear.

"My dear, what are you doing?"

"Your car's being driven again."

"Darling, this happened yesterday, you must be imagining it. Besides, that's no reason to take your father's phone, sweetheart. You just woke up; you were still dreaming, dear."

"I didn't sleep last night."

"Oh, I'm sure you did dearest, you just don't notice it. Come on, I'll show you the car again. It's still here, I've decided to spend the mornings with you of late, and you know it's not gone anywhere again."

"There's no need. I know it's there."

"There we go darling, seeing some sense now", he beamed. "I'm going; I think I'll have my daily viewing now."

"Ok, dear, I'd call your driver but, well, you do have my phone dear."

"I do", she threw the phone to the ground, smashing it into many pieces that formed a structured circle around the place where it landed, "I'll call him myself, 'Daddy.'"

Sure enough, she called her driver as she made her way to their meeting place.

They both arrived simultaneously.

"I'd like to sit in the front", said Eden.

"I'm afraid you can't, ma'am", he emphasised.

"You're afraid, are you? Should be brave. Anyway, the seat looks near-perfectly fine to me."

"Yes, near-perfect. It most certainly isn't safe to sit on, subjected to the same difficulties as the engine, I suppose. Damn manufacturers."

"I'll sit in the back then", Eden said, clutching the watch in her back pocket.

The door flung open and she slowly made her way in and rested on the seat. The driver turned the keys and then the wheel with one hand and brushed his hair back against gravity with the other.

The garage door opened, coinciding with the car, and they entered outside and began Eden's 'Daily Viewing' like a dog being walked. She merged with the back of the seat, then decided not to and pushed herself forwards, leaning on her knees. She gazed out through the window.

"How's the engine?", she asked.

"Alright, I suppose. They should be fixing the system soon, mind", he replied.

"How's it been driving lately?" enquired Eden.

"Perfectly, albeit a bit shaky."

"So near-perfectly then?"

"I suppose so. I mean it's never really been too good since had that crash wi... Had that crash", he stuttered.

"I didn't know you had a crash."

"Yes you did, the accident."

"With who?"

"Ma'am, your Mother."

Eden flung her arm upwards from her back pocket, brushing her hair forwards, against gravity. She attacked the window with her Mother's watch. Repeatedly smashing against the window.

"Ma'am, Ma'am what are you doing?" said the driver, "Ma'am, I'm, I'm s-sorry, I just thought you knew..."

A slight rainbow formed upon her tears as she battered against the window with her mother's watch, now fashioned like a dagger, from the filing the previous night. The tip collided again and again with the window, slowly beginning to form a glass-dust precipitate and a dent.

"Ma'am, please!", He glanced in the rear view mirror. "Ma'am do not do that!", she continued pummelling the window with her mother's dagger-watch, "Please stop, Ma'am", the window was succumbing to Eden's entire wrath, "Ma'am! Your condition" The dagger-watch sustained its unrelenting attempt at perforation. "Ma'm! You'll die!"

"Good," Eden pulled back her arm and then thrust it forward, driving the dagger-watch straight through the window. The driver pushed his hand down through his hair, letting it fall. The middle cracked, just a slight crack, but enough to build upon. The crack grew and spread through the middle as Eden let go of the dagger-watch. Droplets of glass fell through its own hold and smashed even further on the ground outside. Abruptly, the entire middle of the window yielded and shattered, resulting in an expulsion of glass and beams of light, temporarily blinding Eden. The driver grunted with the upmost despondence.

Eden's vision slowly came back and she followed the now half-shattered window with her eyes. She gazed longingly at the top of the window, the still intact part, showing the gorgeous, perfect New York skyline of distant skyscrapers sparkling in the dusk. This framed the centre. She shut her eyes and expected to feel the sunlight embrace her face. It didn't. She opened her eyes and stared at the cracked part that showed a far different picture. The dusk remained, but the skyscrapers didn't. Instead, they were replaced with canyons of bombardment and cataclysmic destruction. The sky had been scorched, and was no longer blue; it had lost all hue and was rendered grey. The sun was still there, but it seemed so embarrassed with what was below it shrunk away into the apparent nothingness. The light that had blinded her was the sparks that had flown from the window as she savaged it.

"Ma'am, please. Wait," said the driver, who might as well have been speaking in another language, or, preferably, not speaking at all.

She hurdled out through the window and ran outside.

"Sir, we have a code decaying blue" the driver said to his phone, "I repeat we have a code decayi... Oh screw it! Your daughter's smashed a window and has gone outside. I repeat your daughter's smashed a window and has gone outside. Well, how could I stop her – the bloody wall barricades us from each other. My only ammunition was words, and I'm not exactly Wordsworth, sir. Yes, sir I'm sorry. You ought to get here right away; she's just standing outside the car."

Eden fell to her knees, enveloped with looming canyons and destruction.

"Eden, darling," said her father.

"You, you lied to me. My entire life you lied to me! I'm not allergic to light! Who the hell is allergic to light? Why was I so stupid as to believe you? As to live my life in confinement? Those windows, they were, they were screens playing videos! That must've been why I saw your car pull out. Everything I saw through them was a lie. Everything you said to me was a lie. Everything! The skyscrapers, sky, the pool." She went quiet, "The hummingbird"

"Darling, I couldn't let you know what we'd done. The war. The bombs. The greed. It was awful, vile – horrific. You're my everything -To corrupt you like that, would be a crime, Darling – I had to! To save you"

"To save me? I'd rather see this scenery than the inside of that mansion. How could that save me? How could I make a difference in ignorance? Was that why Mother was killed in the "accident"? She wanted to take me outside. I remember swimming with her; I must have been so young then. That must've been before this, this, whatever this is, this war, whatever you want to call it. That's all gone now. The sun, the skyline, the pool, the blue water, Mother and that hummingbird. She wanted to take me outside. I wanted to go outside. I want to go outside"

She sauntered through the gardens, mapping the inside of the mansion as she stared at it. She found her bedroom and swung her head around. She saw the pool. It was empty, without the blue water she had remembered and had dreamed of. She remembered dreaming of swimming in it. Running towards it she slammed her feet into the metal ladder, clambering through rung after, finally propelling herself the five or so centimetres from the cold metal into the empty pool. She battled through gravity - for but a second - then fell to the bottom. She staggered into the centre, sat down and shut her eyes.

"I only did what I think best for you, my dear", her father said, as a blue hummingbird flew past his eyes, into the apparent nothingness.