

It wasn't enough that he had to come up with an entirely novel idea on such a short notice; he also had to do so while under the influence of that most dreadful of numbers, one which brought a multitude of leery eyes and lurid grins from those around him, eager to see what would come out of the tip of his fingers, what madness was wrought from a mind fractured by the need to find some new and unexplored corner of the very essence of sexuality. An average Monday, as far as he was concerned, and indeed the reason for why he'd dipped into the realms of the pornographic to begin with, but the significance of that week was perhaps a bit too much for the author to truly live up. How could he, after sixty-eight prior forays into whatever deranged idea his readers could come up with? How, after sixty-eight unique tales told from the perspective of someone who had naught but second-hand accounts, could he find a way to be surprising, to be *fresh*? How could he sit down and create something truly *unique*, when at times he found himself staring at the empty screen, at an empty page, on an empty browser, wondering what synonym he should use to refer to a phallus that day? Questions like these were his lifeblood; it was precisely this endless conflict between his defeatism and his need to perform that brought about the sort of ludicrous twists and turns that left others ready to salivate, or just weak at the knee from exposure to words that should never have been written. It was a contest, a competition in fact, whereby his many facets fought with one another over dominance before the ever-present blanket of existential dread showed up to rain on everyone's parade, then back again in an ever-escalating maelstrom that only ended when those *damned alarms* went off again. Why had he ever created them? What possessed him to sit down and write such a nonsensical limitation on his own ability to decide how much "big" was "big enough", assuming such a state was even possible? Perhaps it was a true moment of madness, where he decided that more continuity and rigid rules was precisely what his increasingly wide repertoire of recurring character archetypes needed; that, perhaps, the enjoyment one derived from his works would be heightened by restraining it, even if said enjoyment came mostly from the very concept of limitations not being applicable most of the time. It was the idea that a story, even one built entirely on a premise that made no sense from the very beginning, had to be internally consistent in order to be truly appreciated, rather than simply throwing words at the reader and expecting them to enjoy whatever slop they were served; thus the idea of *compressors*. It was such a wonderful plot device, even if they themselves were horribly stupid from any kind of reasonable perspective. By necessity, the ability to bend space and time in such a way as to enable the comfortable hiding of proportions would mean that whatever civilization had achieved such a stupendous feat should, by all means, be the masters of their own universe. By logic alone, there should be no relatable stories to tell, for furkind in these tales would be so alien as to be incapable of being understood; instead, the ability to manipulate the fabric of existence somehow co-existed with a perfectly relatable modern world, with the same sort of everyday, mundane issues that one faced in their daily, humdrum life, ready to be swept away and reset as the plot demanded, and there were the *bloody alarms* again. Every single time he tried to think through that barrier, the damned sirens went off, as if him approaching *that* particular limit made reality itself put up a STOP sign and order him back, rather than allowing him to crash through it like it did with literally everything

else; was he not allowed to consider the implications of his own creativity? Was he not permitted to try and experiment with the tropes he himself had either created or helped to develop out of some more primitive nucleus? The alarms certainly seemed to think so; any time he attempted to reason with the notion of compressors, they were far too happy to go off and needle his brain for as long as it took for him to stop thinking about it, a warning sign that he was going places he shouldn't be. If only they were there for anything else, rather than the one thing the author *wanted* to overthink and overdevelop; there were so many potential stories to tell out of something as simple as taking compressor technology to its very limit, so many tales that could be told, ones that his readers would *want* to read and share and openly theorize about! There was no limit to where his creativity could take him, and yet whenever he tried to go anywhere at all, the *bloody sirens* went off, keeping him firmly grounded in a state where the closest he could get to a breakthrough was readjusting his many bras and hoping that handled the weight. An empty page, on an empty word processor, bereft of any words; a special number, one that *needed* something out of the ordinary in order to truly live up to expectations. It felt, to a certain extent, that nothing he *could* write would be sufficient; nothing he could ever think to put down would in any way come close to what others could imagine, to the *expectations* placed upon him by a crowd comprised almost entirely of those possessed by minds at least half as polluted as his own. Was that not the cross that all writers bore? The knowledge that they were weaving a narrative that anyone could easily outmaneuver by way of not understanding the limitations of storytelling. It was so easy, *too easy*, for one to think in abstract terms of horniness and arousal and then call *that* a story; sure, attempting to write it down would lead to a disjointed mess of plot holes, poor characterization, and even poorer worldbuilding, but was the point not to indulge in self-gratification? What did it matter that the character did something they literally said they couldn't just three pages earlier, if the end result was more of that character to love? Hell, the very act of doing the impossible was oftentimes *part* of the narrative itself, as the ability to perform acts that should not be capable of being performed fed into the idea that the protagonist, or at least the individual from whose point-of-view we saw the story unfold, was something akin to a *god* (or goddess, depending), purely by virtue of being in the spotlight. An interesting notion, in fact, one the author latched onto the moment he had it: was the crux of the issue not that these sorts of stories happened to a character only because they *were* the main character? More often than not, passing references were made to others in their same situation (no matter how unlikely this was), bringing up the possibility that perhaps, there was some power inherent to being the one who the story was told about; yes, *yes*, this could be it! A meta twist, a tired one to be sure, but just the one he was looking for: the notion that one's participation in a tale was what brought about the changes whose existence was justifiable by the titillation they produced in others! It wasn't a quirk of genetics or an interaction with some unfathomable cosmic being; these might very well be the framework, the in-universe reason why the story itself was happening, but the *real* explanation was far simpler: the story happened to the character, because they were a character made for the story to happen to... or were they? Were they, as the author liked to think, puppets? Little pieces of imaginary meat on strings whose purpose was solely to

be used and discarded as necessary to make the plot advance? Or were they... more? He could barely hear the alarms now, too embroiled in this conundrum of his own making, this perplexing line of thought that, for once, entertained him enough that he sat back and smiled, staring at the ceiling while absentmindedly playing with one of his busts. Were the characters not *part* of him? Or, at the very least, were they not a reflection of himself? One wrote what they knew, and though the principal and most important concept to keep in mind when creating a character was that one was *not* said character, was it even possible to fully divorce oneself from one's creations? Personally, he didn't think this was at all a remote possibility; to do so would mean to create without being oneself, or at least to fully divest from one's personality before writing something down. Perhaps someone with some mindboggingly rare mental condition could compartmentalize to that degree, but he couldn't; to him, it was simply a given that whenever he wrote a character, whenever he *created* one from nothing, he was placing a little bit of himself into it, even if just the tiniest sliver. It wasn't enough to fully map out his personality, nor *should* it be given the primordial sin that were self-inserts, but they added up: one character here, one protagonist there, throw in a couple of villains or antagonists in order to explore less welcome parts of his psyche, and the author was convinced that anyone dedicated enough could draw up a psychological profile of his mind with... *some* degree of accuracy, perhaps. But if that were the case, then who was the reflection of whom? Was it him who created the characters, or the characters that fed back into him? And why were the sirens so *loud* that day?! Heavens above, he'd only grown a few cup sizes and already the godsdamned alarms were blaring in his ears to tell him to simmer down, making the author wish he'd remembered to create a bloody off switch. No matter, he could learn to ignore them, even if the noises never truly went away; he could learn to let them slip into the back of his head as he wondered whether he was on the side of the monitor he assumed he was. Looking down at himself, he could certainly see why that question would even be posed: though few would ever know it, he did actually manage to write protagonists that were *smaller* than he was, which... he was somewhat certain had always been the case. Maybe. Yes, people had a tendency to look at him weirdly when he went shopping, and he'd never seen anyone else with three busts attached to their chest, but he'd always been like that; he'd always been so laden with milk that he needed a handful of milking machines just to keep him at an acceptable size, that was the whole *point*. How did his readers think he knew so much about what it meant to have those sorts of endowment? Imagination? Thinking them up and then heading down the path of mindless logic until he stumbled onto something that made sense? Nonsense, gibberish! How could he have ever written anything remotely enjoyable without first-hand knowledge of how such anatomy worked? How could he have ever known what a nightmare compressors were to write about if he hadn't had to deal with them on a regular basis? The alarms were there for a reason, even if he regularly ignored them (much to the chagrin of his landlord); it just so happened that he wasn't... quite certain that he had the timeline correct. Not that he doubted it, not that he had any problems with his version of events, but the unfortunate reality of being a writer was that it was stupendously easy to get lost in time and forget about when things *happened*, to the point where he would have no clue what day it was

even when he was a computer screen and had that information readily available to him if he just looked in the corner. Perhaps things slipped through the cracks; perhaps he had once been smaller and just didn't remember it, or had actually been *bigger* and then somehow managed to cut himself down to size. Whatever the case, it wasn't important; what mattered was trying to wrangle his own lack of understanding over his role into something more productive, to understand whether he was the one who defined his character or if reality had things going the other way around and he just never realized it. After all, it was oftentimes so easy to lose himself to impulses, moods, urges; sometimes he would become someone else entirely and simply lack the ability to "switch back", as it were, almost as if he *had* become this different entity. But were they a different entity? Were they another person entirely, sharing space within his body, or were they merely another aspect of his personality that he found it difficult to explore without having some odd, highly specific framework to use for cover? Perhaps he was deeper than he realized, though not necessarily in the sense that he had anything meaningful to say; his trade was smut, not philosophy, and though the two were just as valid in terms of being life pursuits, it was difficult to argue that anything he wrote had more depth than the oceans of cream he occasionally put to (digital) paper... though, given the magnitude of those, that was probably a poor comparison. Still, it raised plenty of questions that he lacked an answer to, and *that* was what brought a smile to his face; allergy to routine had turned the normal, the mundane, into anathema for him, hence his need to seek out new and novel forms of stimulation. Not necessarily *more*, just... different. And it was there, sitting at his desk, staring at an empty page on an empty screen, that the author came to understand that he'd just stumbled upon something magnificent: uncertainty. Oh, to not know, to stare into oneself and see not a solid rock, but shifting sands, a foundation that refused to stand still. To look into one's soul and not be able to see into it, to *know* that there was a truth, that there was *truth* in general, hidden away within that globular mass of likes and hatred and favourite recipes for pasta and roast chicken. To be able to close his eyes and, for once, just *ignore* the damned sirens, even when they kept getting louder and louder; it was heavenly, to not know, for to not know meant that he could *find out*. Perhaps he wasn't at all a reflection of his creations, and this avenue of self-inquiry would lead to a very flustered young man staring at himself in the mirror as he measured his nine mounds again for any signs of growth; or perhaps he would unearth a revelation about himself that he never thought possible to exist, something that would upturn his life to such a degree that he would never be like himself ever again. Hell, he *wasn't* like himself already; just the fact that he had these thoughts surely meant that he had become something else entirely! Maybe he was right: maybe he *was* the sum total of his creations, not because they were somehow separate *things* that fed back into him, but because they themselves were reflections of *him* in the first place. He wasn't a mirror to be shone upon, but rather the source of illumination; but could a lightbulb see its own glare? Or did it require something to bounce off of, something to send back what it gave to the world, that it may know what blessed bounty it provided? Granted, these were far more grandiose terms than the author would normally be comfortable using, but he figured he'd earned the right to be a little self-serving, especially when he had to push his chair back once his busts

got in the way again. Really, having to sit sideways because of how much room those things took up was the worst part of... whatever had led to him developing three triplets on his chest in the first place. Maybe it was all the smut; even if he was the lightbulb in the metaphor, was it not true that reflected light came back to its origin slightly different than it had been initially? He wasn't a physicist, so what he just said might as well just be complete idiocy, but from a purely introspective perspective, it made *some* sense: if his characters were a reflection of him, then by writing them, he would then reabsorb part of what made them unique, internalizing aspects that had already (presumably) been there to begin with. A process, and a long one, but one sure to enact changes to his mind and body that he'd be unable to notice; it would take an outside eye to look at him and wonder if anything had changed at all, since really, one's ability to grade oneself was always lowest than anyone else's. After all, he liked to think that he was just like everyone else, utterly unremarkable really, but when was the last time he saw someone with a titstack big enough to be taller than them? Hell, when was the last time he'd seen anyone at all? Getting shopping done with a series of busts that large was all-but impossible, forcing him to drag himself around exclusively within the confines of his home while calling for deliveries. But that was hardly important; he still had work to do, a page (or several) to fill. And that meant sitting down, focusing, and getting the words out in a half-satisfactory manner.

And why were the damned sirens so *loud* that day?