

Prologue. D and M together, outside of the narrative

D

You're sitting on the ground under a tarp that y'all hung to give you some shade. You're sweaty and smell sour and you haven't changed your clothes in days.

M

Which is why you're here. Because you're a good wife.

D

Devoted.

M

You're still at work at this point, this is before you quit. You came from work, is that right?

D

On my way to work.

M

On your way, yes. You stop by with a couple changes of clothes. Hold up a sheet so I can change in the corner of the lean-to. You talk to me and tell me you think the house is haunted.

D

You don't want to hear it, you just want to talk about the occupation. You say it could become the most important thing that's ever happened to us.

M

You don't believe that yet. You want to talk about the ghost. It's the same ghost that haunted our last place on Tasker. You've been seeing it when you wake up. You lie in bed after waking up for minutes at a time, unable to move, seeing this ghost, talking with it in your head.

D

You said it was sleep paralysis.

M

It is sleep paralysis.

D

You know because you had no problem waking up in the morning. It was always your most productive time of day. You saw me when I was waking up, as you cooked us breakfast, and there was no ghost talking to me. You said you heard and understood why I was scared.

M

But you aren't scared.

D

I wasn't, because it wasn't an evil ghost. You finished changing and you complained about the way the protest was going. You said it was inefficient, and, what was the word you used?

M

Liminal and liberal.

D

But you mixed them up, said libinal.

M

Libidinal.

D

Libidinal! Nothing was happening other than slogans being shouted. No one was crossing police barricades, no one was blocking the streets. There weren't enough reporters for it to be effective propaganda. You were angry.

M

You tell me to be patient.

D

That was never your strong suit.

M

You tell me that people were paying attention. You are right.

D

Not the press, though. You'd caught the attention of the militias. There'd been a bomb threat.

M

You are really scared about that.

D

But you said you'd gotten a bomb threat during every event that you've organized, and it'd never materialized.

M

It is a bright morning. Some people are shouting slogans.

D

A white man with dreadlocks was playing on a drum.

M

A few police officers are standing in a clump talking with each other. At ease, bored.

D

One of them lit a cigarette, another told him to put it out, they were on duty.

M

You are tucking the tag into the back of my shirt. You say, "Don't worry, there will be time for chaos."

D

You exploded. There was a shrapnel bomb in a car by the park.

M

I don't see it.

D

You didn't see it. But I did. The shrapnel ripped you apart. It was so slow. Scrap metal through your cheek, a nail into your ear canal, ball bearings in your eyes. The meat of your face turned to mush and putty. You weren't there anymore.

M

I don't see that.

D

Did you see me die?

M

No. I see the flash of the explosion and it was so bright that I didn't see anything else. Just white, filling my vision. And I see my field of vision shrinking, getting smaller and smaller and smaller. Like my peripheral vision is just... poof, gone. There is nothing other than the shrinking bright.

D

Your eyes exploded out of your sockets as your skull was crushed. One just as goop, the other mostly intact.

M

There are figures around me. Not the activists or the police or even you. I can't see them, just feel them. They feel old. They feel like if they were to take my hand and hold it between their hands and say "it'll be ok. I know, I've been through it," I would believe them. There are so so many of them.

D

I threw up my hands to try to get in between the shrapnel and you, but you were already dead.

M

I can feel the wisdom of the figures buzz in my chest like a subwoofer at a rock concert. They are offering that wisdom to me. They have been waiting to give it to me for many many years. They've been waiting to take me for my entire life.

D

What were you thinking?

M

I'm not ready. Not yet. What are you thinking?

D

Not her, take me. Do you think they listened to you?

M

I think they listen to you. You need me.

D

I think they listened to you, the world needed you.

M

...Past tense.

D

A big piece of metal blew open your skull, and then it was a few seconds earlier. It was bright and sweaty and I was adjusting your tag.

M

You pull me from the collar, throwing me down on the ground and behind that tree.

D

And you survived.

M

You survive.

D

You had a bruise on your neck for weeks.

M

It is a reminder of your love.

D

Why didn't you tell me about the white light and the figures?

M

That bomb changes everything in the entire world. There are more important things to figure out. I'll go back there anyway.

D

You were embarrassed about it, too, I think.

M

Maybe. Maybe I don't have a vocabulary for it.

D

Maybe you didn't want to believe that you were mortal.

M

I don't think that's it at all. That's not it at all.

D

Maybe.

M

You are so scared afterwards. We both almost die. You are so scared and you need me. I don't want to take space away from you.

D

Come on M, it wouldn't have... I always said I want you to have your own-

M

It's ok, we don't have to have the argument again. We both understand each other.

D

Yeah, we do.

Silence.

D

God, I missed talking with you.

XXXXXXXX

The night after the first explosion. M and D at home.

M

Shh darling, it's ok. It's gonna be ok.

D

No...

M

Just listen to me, just listen. It's going to be ok. It'll take time, but if we're patient and careful, they won't be here anymore. We'll take the world away from them. And if they survive the war, they'll die without power or ceremony. They'll die or they'll get dementia and get locked away, or they'll be rounded up in the night and taken away into some lovely castle in the clouds. But you won't have to be around them anymore.

D

I just want...

M

I know. This is gonna be our world soon. It's gonna belong to us. It won't be till we're old, and till we're ugly. We'll be scary old crones, wrinkly, warts, scaring the neighborhood kids, growing herbs and pot in our backyard plots, defending our house with shotguns and witchcraft. We'll be ugly hags, and we'll be bitter, and we will have lived a long, spiteful life. In spite of everyone else. To spite everyone else. And then we'll wake up one morning, and realize that something has changed. That overnight, the air has gotten thinner and cleaner. And all those shitty shitty people, all those sanctimonious heartless old pieces of shit, those people who never let us forget that they used to control us, they'll be gone. They'll have disappeared into air. And the world will belong to us. And to our odd monstrous adopted children. And their odd monstrous adopted children. It'll just be us left. Just freaks and faggots.

D

They won't all just die on their own. There are too many, they're too young, they're everywhere.

M

It wouldn't happen all at once. And it wouldn't happen peacefully. But all of their fake-sinless blood will return to the earth and the sea. And one day it'll be over and we'll be the only ones left. Then, then I'll let you die. And not a day before then, you hear me?

D, crying, nods.

M

You're gonna be a fantastic spiteful old hag. We both will. We can put curses on the neighborhood boys. Right? That's something we can be. That's something that we can become. We can look forward to that.

D

Don't go back out there tomorrow.

M

I have to, babe. I have to go out there tonight. This is the start of something really big. That bomb killed people. That's leftist blood shed. Unprovoked. Peaceful. I heard someone got it on film. This is the first time we've had the public's sympathy. We gotta capitalize now, immediately. A show of strength. The dead would have wanted it this way. When I die, babe, torch a CVS as my funeral pyre.

D

Don't die, though.

M

No intention of it.

D

Don't go tonight. Stay with me tonight. I already saw you dead today.

M

I'm gonna speak at the vigil. Show them we're not scared, that we're here to fight. Honestly, I've never felt this alive!