

## **sequestered lilies**

the world is ending, and a girl goes out of her house for the first time in years to flood her room.

yuri vignettes, 2/10

rooms are all uncanny.

we all enter them, are in them, are out of them, and we leave them. all at once, all in different moments.

there are many ways to be "in" a room: laying under or on something, being on the floor, sitting on a chair, standing, hiding somewhere, reading something or typing something out. all things do this, not just you.

...

i'm somewhat scared of my room. i also don't really want to leave it.

i mean, it has all my stuff: yuri, a laptop, clothing, a bunch of books, plushies. what else could i wish for?

there isn't a reason to be scared of it.

well, there is. there doesn't seem to be water anywhere. the sea isn't anywhere.

there's obviously water elsewhere. a fridge, for one.  
multiple sinks too. the rain...sometimes.

but i wish to flood this place a little with the sea. to make  
this bed a seabed.

the question of how to do that eludes me however, at least  
the question of how to do it without massively harming this  
place. i don't want to destroy anything.

but i guess that's just me wanting to maintain my complicity.  
i am unwilling to take hold of things that might seem  
unsightly to others.

...

the laptop slowly stumbles into life. i want to talk to  
someone that can help me.

i think she's one of the few people i truly enjoy talking to.  
we always have these weird conversations about a lot of  
things, and we always share stuff we engaged with.

i stare at my window as i robotically type in my password.  
for some reason, flowers are growing. on the concrete, on the  
grass, on the fences.

i've read about this before, i think...

if it's right, then.

god, my head is spinning. it's probably right, but...

i glance back, i notice a few messages before i loaded the page i saw earlier. it's from her.

"hey, did you see what is going on?"

"yeah, i don't know what is happening exactly, but i think the world's ending."

"wait, are you fucking serious? no shot, right?"

"mhm. it was on some...site about anomalies or something. i think i forgot what it's called though."

"i...i guess this is just it, isn't it? no big storm of media? no spectacle? no bang? no panic? that's it?"

"i mean, i guess so. i didn't know this is how it'd all end."

"at least it isn't all violent, right?"

...

no, she isn't right about that.

it's all so...beautifully violent.

no mourning, no pondering about our deaths, no grief, not even a return to anything at all. it's just all...nothing. i hate that. i hate it so much that i want to vomit.

"it just pisses me off."

"eh? in what way!? there were so many ways to just have it all disappear! at least we have a peaceful one, i...i suppose."

"...i mean, it's beautiful. that's for sure. but...peaceful? in what world is this peaceful?"

"but-"

she doesn't notice, but i tear up for a bit.

"i...i don't know how to say it, but it can't be anything else but fascism for it to end like this. it has to be."

"n-no way that you just...wait-"

"i..."

i try to muster up what i want to say, but it keeps being interrupted by my sobs and my shaky arms. i couldn't figure out what i wanted to claim. every word in my head disappears into the ether, only being uttered in tears and incidental keystrokes.

"i get it. we just...have our little charade. a chance of being in some sort of 'community' where we love each other. you...you didn't want it to be like this. you've always hated that kind of stuff, right?"

"...y-yea."

"are you alright?"

"...i want you to help me with something. do you want my address?"

"what? i...sure. it's not as if others will find it in time."

i send her my address. i want to be with her, for some reason. at least for the flooding.

"...hm. it should take 4 hours to get to you. are you fine with that? i know that you often don't talk to anyone else but me and i won't be able to type."

"it's fine. i promise you...i think."

"if you say so"

i close my laptop for now after seeing that.

...

right. i never really went out of my room for a while. it was all so scary. i forgot why i did so...it was so long ago...

the world was nothing but horror to me. i just...decided to only seclude myself from the world. it's not like many people would disturb me.

i once only came out to occasionally buy some more books with the little money i still had, but other than that...

the cycle was the same at least. somehow, i got to work from home and-

the tv turned on. or maybe i started hearing it. not sure why, but that always happens every once in a while. sometimes i forget to turn it off after i am done skimming on it for a minute.

chrysanthemums are growing. flowers on concrete. it's a surreal, beautiful sight. if only it weren't so rotten. if only.

...

looking at it, the tv was just playing some songs. it was a serene, calming song to the tune of the flowers growing around the world.

it reminds me of something.

last month, i read a story about an evil empire of sorts where one person managed to infiltrate its ranks.

they were given such a godlike status. almost like they were a force of distilled goodness as opposed to the cruelty of the empire he infiltrates. as a result, they were showered with praise by everyone and they managed to dismantle the empire. what ushered was a new kind of society, one where its people knew nothing of evil and everything about benevolence. an omnibenevolent city.

it was so beautiful, so sentimental...

and so vile.

truly the most disgusting, most noxious piece i've ever seen. i'm not sure why. it was as if it was too comfortable. no room for unsettlement. just pure, pure, sentimentality.

this was what i thought about as i finally left my house. it's been too long. way too long to remember.

...

it's 3pm. only 9 hours until it goes dark.

it's been an hour since she last sent that message. i should be able to gather the water before she comes.

ah, right. the weather is more comfortable than ever. how sweet. comical, even.

even yesterday the weather felt unbearable, even though i wasn't outside. wonder how they did that. maybe it was all just a coincidence. maybe the world disgustingly wanted the day to be comfortable.

a few birds pass by me, though i can't really tell what kind of bird they are. i remember a part of the article that i mentioned that said something about there being special kinds of birds that reduce violence. i don't know if those specifically exist, but i wouldn't be surprised.

...right. the beach. it's nearby.

...

there are many ways to be in a beach.

people are relaxing. people are surfing. they're swimming, walking around the shoreline, gathering shells, perhaps fishing in the distance.

me? i want to gather water. i want to dip into the ocean all the way until i can touch the floor.

maybe people are already doing that. maybe.

in my cart was a few 10 liter sized water containers. enough to ensure that my mattress would be only half submerged. it would also make the water lilies easier to grasp as i lay down for my penultimate moments. the moments where there's nothing left to do but be with my friend and close my eyes.

water is rushing to the container. perhaps too quickly, actually, as one is already filled and i forgot to check.

the world became beautiful, so i guess i should've expected this to happen.

my watch tells me that my friend should be here by thirty minutes. my sightline tells me that water lilies are nearby. my auditory orifices tell me-

no, let's just gather the water lilies. we only have one container left, anyway.

...

right. i underestimated the weight of water. god, everything feels like fracturing. the sores of my outmatched body are getting unbearable.

who would've known? an out of shape woman can't carry 100 liters of water with ease.

at least we're home now...

"hey!!! are you okay?"

and just in time. 6 hours remain.

"yeah...i just...wanted to do something special."

"it's okay. i can help you with carrying this back home. i just...didn't expect you to be outside, let alone with a cart full of water."

"today's a special day, right? a beautiful, horrible day."

"...i guess so."

as my hands finally free themselves of the cart, i rush back to the inside of my house. the pangs of my body bang every part of my body. god, i haven't felt like this in years.

the tv is still playing. this time, it was on how...ouch, my head hurts.

anyway, they decided to run a program about different flower types. lily of the valley, a droopy flower that's poisonous and signifies the return to happiness; asphodels, a somewhat spiky and upright flower that represents death and mourning; sunflowers, a bright-

"so, what's the water for?"

"ah! yea...it's...i want to flood my room."

"w-what? why? i guess we can do that, but i'm not sure why this idea suddenly popped into your head."

"luna. i..."

again, my streak of tears suddenly run into the scene. luna does too as she decides to embrace me in her arms. i'm sorry...i...

"i hate this so much. i...i don't know what to do. is that how it is? does the story end like that? no mourning, nothing? just an endless lamentation that the story's over?"

"what do you...right. you...you told me about this before.

but...i..."

i can feel her shaking. i don't want to look. i feel like i should just run away. the last thing i wanted to do is to make her cry.

"...i want to make a new story."

"eh?"

"that's what this is for right? even if it's just for a few hours, we can begin a new story. we can do something, even if it isn't beautiful. even if there's nothing to gain from this. we can try again. or, at least we can try for a couple of hours. isn't that so, pisces?"

"...y-yea...i just. i just need to relax first."

"it's okay. i'll just prepare food in the meantime."

...the throes of my exhausted body put me into the abyss.

...

"hey? you there?"

"mmh..."

damnit. how long has it...it's 9pm. damnit.

"you've been out for a while. that's fine though because..."

the scent hits me. i know it.

"no...no way."

"you like braised food right? well..."

braised collard greens and chicken thighs. i knew luna had some cooking skill, but god i didn't expect her to be that good.

"i also gathered some more flowers, if you don't mind."

"that's...mmh...that's perfect actually. i think i'll just- i'll just get my food and return to my room."

"mmkay."

i jump out of the couch i was resting in to plate the food luna cooked for us. all that's left is to get this room soaked.

...

do i need to say it? fine, the food was incredible. i'm usually quite knowledgeable about this stuff too, but god did she outdo me with this.

i return to the kitchen to put the remains of my meal into the sink, and it was just in time for to see luna carry the cart into the room.

"nothing left to do, right?"

"y-yeah..."

"well, you know what's next."

right after she says that, she drops some of the water lilies on the floor. i clean up the plate and the spoon as i hear the soft noise of them dropping. there's only one thing left to do.

...

the door closes as my hands pull the handle. right as she hears that, luna starts dumping the water. i do so too.

"god, you really carried all of this back home? i didn't know you still had some strength in you."

"aaaagh...don't mention that..."

"sorry, sorry."

time passes by as we continue to lay water into my room. the books that were once on the floor get swept up in it as the pages start to show their damage.

before we knew it, all one hundred liters of water were in the room the mattress was almost fully soaked. the water lilies, asphodels, chrysanthemums, magnolias, and sunflowers floating were a sight to behold.

"and...there!"

more lilies are thrown on the mattress. as my eyes fixate on the mattress, it would only be mere seconds until i see luna there too.

"pisces, what's up?"

"i...i don't get it."

"don't worry. i don't too."

11:30pm. 30 minutes.

i lay my body next to hers on the mattress. the texture of a wet mattress is off-putting, but i guess i can deal with that.

"so, what will be our new story, pi?"

"i...i want to begin here."

"obvious enough, silly"

"gah! luna..."

"sorry, sorry, it was a rude comment. you can continue."

"waaaah..."

my heart flutters. i haven't interacted with someone next to me in so long. it takes a while...but...

"i want to be with the sea. i want to never forget it as i wade through its waters. i wish to be alongside you and your gentle hands. we...we will guide each other into the sea, no matter its abyssal depths. this...this is our beginning...mh?"

a kiss...it takes all my will to not immediately panic...but it works, even if my face turns all red.

"ehe. just...a bit of a surprise."

"grrrrr..."

"what is it?"

i say nothing, but my arms suddenly wrap around her in an automatic motion. i...i don't know why i did it. i just had to.

"...i...you're so sweet, you know?"

"eh?"

"i mean, in many ways you have this way of speaking i never truly got, but i always felt warmer with you typing. with you...it's just..."

she's yawning. it's almost time for a new da- right.

"do you...do you want to sleep now?"

"mhm..."

my arms don't let go. the scent of the sea and the flowers is compelling me to embrace her as my eyes drift away into the darkness. before they do, i hear one more thing.

"know that i love you, my dear pi. may our story continue."

"i...i love you too."

and the world's lights shut down.