

Medea

As Above So Below

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Prologue

I have worn many names.

Some whispered in the silence of temples long turned to dust. Others cried aloud by those who begged me for more time. I have been called *Mercy. Justice. Vengeance. Monster. Savior.*

But never the **truth**.

Even he did not know.

He especially did not know.

He thought I was an echo, a shadow of a force older than stars, and perhaps I let him believe that.

I did what I did not because it was right. The concept of rightness... it breaks too easily under the weight of eternity. Nor did I act out of malice. I do not own cruelty; it is a mortal invention.

I acted because he believed it had to be done. And I... I loved him.

What you believe to be real, the laws you obey, the sky you admire, the death you fear, none of it is truth. It is... scaffolding. A theater stage with velvet curtains and fragile props. You were placed within it like actors in a tale you did not write. And I? I was the script.

Not the villain.

Not the hero.

The boundary.

The keeper.

The silence after your final breath.

Some say reality is code. Others, divine decree. But it was me. I am the hum beneath your physics, the dream behind your biology. And yet, you never saw me.

You weren't meant to.
He never saw me either.
And that, perhaps, is the tragedy I carry.

I could have chosen differently. I could have torn the veil and shown the world its shape. I could have let you all wake up.
But you know? Loyalty is a rare thing, even among the stars.
You humans throw the word around like pocket change, press it into hands, spend it on whims, trade it for comfort or convenience. But here? Up where the threads of existence are stitched and unstitched with thought? It's no different. Gods bargain. Guardians betray. Even eternity has its politics. *As **above**, so **below**.*

But he... he was *different*.
He didn't barter loyalty. He gave it, raw, reckless, like it still meant something.

So I did. I gave him my **word**.

The Nexus

The Nexus wasn't truly a place. Not in the way people imagined places to be. It was more... held together by will than by matter. A liminal corridor suspended between dimensions, neither life, death, nor dream, yet touched by all three. Some called it a crossing. Others, a prison.

But in truth, it was a construct.

Medea had built it after the Event, though no soul remembered what that event had been. Perhaps that was part of its design, memory scrubbed clean, like a chalk slate after a lesson no one wanted to remember.

The Nexus looked like a palace from forgotten dreams, something out of an empire that had never existed, yet somehow remembered by every culture. Vast halls stretched without clear end, their surfaces latticed with fractal patterns etched in luminous stardust. The geometry was maddening, symmetrical yet somehow always shifting when one tried to memorize it. Some corridors shimmered with the echo of constellations, starlight suspended midair like chandeliers sculpted from dark matter.

It resembled an old Persian palace, maybe. But only if the palace had been built by an architect who spoke in equations and thought in light.

Souls arrived by the thousands. Some floated. Others walked, dazed. Some cried. Most were silent. All passed through.

The Nexus thrummed with machinery so advanced it might as well have been divine. There were interfaces crafted of song, doors made from polished void, engines that whispered their calculations in languages older than thought. Seraphic figures, automata, perhaps, or guardians, drifted along magnetic paths, their forms cloaked

in feathers of liquid chrome.

If a soul ever paused long enough to take it all in, they'd say the place looked like the forgotten utopia of a cyberpunk Tokyo, overgrown not with neon but with dreams. Cyan light pooled like water on polished floors, while fuchsia glows traced the arcs of invisible rails above.

This was the Nexus.

A transfer station for the soul.
A riddle made manifest.
And Medea was its keeper.

She who had once been something else, before duty chained her, before she decided that no one else would ever fall through the cracks again.
No one left the Nexus unchanged. *Not even her.*

He Who Runs

The trail didn't exist.

Not on any map. Not on any GPS grid. It was a vein in the mountain, invisible to all but those who listened.

Rayénari listened.

He stood at the edge of a cliffline as the wind clawed past him, tugging at his loose white tunic. A strip of woven fabric was tied around his forehead, soaked in the sweat of miles already behind him. His feet, calloused and cracked, bore the story of the land.

Then, without a signal, he ran.

Dust scattered from underfoot, spiraling into the dawn light, casting halos around him as he wove through switchbacks and goat paths.

The mountain didn't challenge him. It revealed itself to him, stone by stone. Ledges that would crumble beneath another's weight held firm for him. He danced across them like a spirit unbound.

He ran past cliffs where hawks nested, their shadows slicing through the morning mist. He ran through fields of mesquite and dry grass, thorns reaching to tear but never catching him. He was too fast. Too fluid. A wind given form.

Stillness was forgetting. *Motion was memory.*

He climbed next. The ascent was brutal, jagged rock and loose shale, the kind that chewed ankles and spat out pride. But he climbed with the rhythm of breath and thunder. Every movement precise, inevitable. As if the mountain had grown around him.

At the summit, he paused.

His chest rose and fell like waves crashing against ageless stone. The land spread wide below canyons and cliffs.

Rayénari reached into the small woven pouch tied at his hip and drew out a mushroom.

The mushroom.

It was dry, leathery, and pale. It pulsed in his palm like a second heartbeat. The Big Chief had given it to him seasons ago, speaking no ceremony, only truth.

*When you're ready to stop being a child, take this. Not all children
become men. Most just grow old boys.*

Big Chief

said calmly knowing the time will come one day

Rayénari had carried those words through fire and dust. Through every run that carved him into something sharper than sinew and deeper than breath. Now, at the peak of the mountain, the highest place he had ever stood, he understood what the Chief had meant.

Becoming a man wasn't about surviving. It was about surrender. Surrender to death.

He knelt in silence and placed the mushroom against his lips. The sky above boiled with motionless clouds. Pines whispered along the ridges. The wind shifted, as if watching.

He chewed.

Bitter.

Dry.

Then nothing.

Then everything.

It began with his bones unraveling.

His breath became smoke. His thoughts became wind.

His body melted into the stone beneath him.

Cold.

Timeless.

He tried to gasp, but his lungs were gone.

His skin peeled away from the world like paper in flame.

This is what dying feels like

Rayénari

thought

The terror was brief. Not gone, no, it was still there, a caged scream beneath his ribs, but smaller.

Held.

Then the world opened.

He stood in a place without time.

The mountain was still beneath him, but stretched eternal, impossibly wide, etched with runes no human hand could carve. The air was layered in light, golden and purple and soaked in memory.

And before him stood *her*.

All black.

No shadow.

Only a female silhouette.

She looked surprised.

You're not supposed to be here

Medea

said

Kuira-bá

Rayénari

said

Rayénari blinked. Or thought he did. The act of seeing no longer required eyes.

He wanted to speak more, to ask but the question dissolved before it reached his mouth.

And then... she was gone.

No final word.

No gesture.

Just absence, thick as gravity.

The world shattered not violently. Reality crumbled into a thousand shimmering fragments. Memory, identity, time they all came apart, and from the stillness at the center, peace emerged.

Pure.

Impossible.

He floated there for a moment, or perhaps an eternity, before the weight of himself began to reassemble.

Back in his body. Back on the mountaintop.

Breath returned like thunder. His fingers clawed at dirt. Tears streaked his cheeks.

He did not weep from pain.

He wept because something inside him had been broken open, and what lay within was older than his name.

Who was she?

Rayénari

whispered aloud, the words strange in his throat but the air did not answer

But a part of him had seen her before.

And she had seen all of him.

Then he turned, and once again, the Earth caught fire beneath his feet.

First Interlude

She didn't speak the name aloud. Even thoughts, here, had weight. The readout shimmered again, confirming the impossible: he had appeared. Fully manifested. Not a dreamprint or echo. Present. This one was him. She dismissed the glyph with a flick, breath shallow. The Nexus reoriented, systems recalibrating like a mind shuffling thoughts. She moved toward the core archive, her steps echoing too sharply on the prism.

How did he get in?

Medea

murmured

The memory flickered again. Those eyes. The mountain still on his skin, the wind somehow still braided into his breath. She hadn't realized it at first. Not until he'd looked at her like that.

Like he remembered.

She accessed the temporal record node, dragging the timeline across layers of dimensional convergence. There it was. Their meeting. Her presence barely registered in the waveform.

It had been the first time since the Event.

Since they were torn apart by choices neither of them had truly made.

Medea straightened. Her eyes drifted over the Nexus. Halls of celestial dust stretched in fractal patterns, silent, serene, and endlessly busy.

A feeling.

That this moment wasn't an accident.

That this, somehow, was the beginning.

Medea silenced the thought. She had duties. Calculations to run. Thousands of souls in transition. And no time for shadows from the past.

But the echo of his name remained, soft and dangerous, beneath her breath.

The Gothic Drag Queen

Anderson had always been... different.

Not in the loud, boisterous way that demanded attention. No, his difference was quiet. Subtle. The kind that lurked beneath good grades and straight spines, beneath polite smiles and wide eyes that saw far too much.

From childhood, computers fascinated him. Not just how they worked but what they implied. Logic within chaos. Systems hidden beneath interfaces. A language no one spoke, yet somehow understood.

But what truly gripped him, what consumed his thoughts long before he learned to code, was death.

He didn't fear it. He studied it. Obsessed over it. Picked at it like a scab, even before he had words for what it meant. He didn't cry at funerals. He watched. He listened. Somewhere deep inside, he recognized it.

So, when the time came, when life offered him the bland promises of adulthood, he turned away. He entered the Gothic scene during his twenties with the same curiosity he once reserved for old motherboards. Leather, lace, dark lipstick, shadowplay. It didn't feel like rebellion. It felt like remembering.

By day, he was a god of logic—, typing spells in silicone temples, hired by FAANG companies who worshiped hacker mindset. He solved problems before they were born. They paid him obscene amounts. He wore clean shirts. Ate clean food.

But by night...

By night he wore black. Not for mourning, but for truth. He slipped into heels, corsets, synthetic hair like flame. Danced under strobes and purple fog. Not Anderson, not the programmer. Someone else. Someone forgotten.

He lived in two worlds. Maybe more.

Then came the DMT.

It wasn't the first time he altered his state. But this time was different. This time, he fell.

Not through time.

Not through space.

Through identity.

And when he came back, shivering, weeping, naked in thought, he knew.

He had lived before.

He had been a Tarahumara man.

He could feel it in his feet.

And yet, he still didn't believe in an afterlife.

Not in the way churches whispered of.

But he knew this reality wasn't real. That much, he understood.

He began to call himself Neo, half-joking. Half not. He watched code leak into reflections. Caught the seams of the simulation in things others ignored. The texture of walls. The lag between dreams and waking. The way light bent around certain people.

He surrounded himself with others like him. Hackers. Dreamers. People who didn't fit because the template was flawed. Many were trans. And he understood.

If this was a simulation, why would the body match the soul? Why would gender be anything but interface?

And so, one night, he made a decision.

Not out of despair. Not out of grief.

Out of clarity.

She stood before the mirror, corset tight, eyeliner perfect, nails lacquered obsidian.

Un Año Quebrado - Hello Seahorse

Music Player

the speakers pulsed with a song only she could claim.

She danced.

Not for an audience. Not for beauty.

She danced like data unraveling. Like grace in freefall. Like someone who remembered what it meant to run without limits.

Kate Bush would've wept.

She opened the window of her high-rise apartment in Manhattan.

Not to fall.

But to leave.

And she jumped not before singing

Deseo encontrar el color de mi piel

Deseo encontrar mi forma natural

Anderson

...

Second Interlude

Again... you?

Medea

didn't speak the words aloud. She didn't need to

The moment his soul signature flared across the lattice, she felt him like a whisper pressed against the walls of her mind.

She stood motionless at the soul array, watching his essence unfurl across the flow. The data was unmistakable. A perfect resonance pattern, threaded with the faint golden edge that marked him apart from the others. As if even the Cosmos couldn't forget.

He had come through again.

And this time, he wasn't just passing through. This time, she sensed something different. A shift in the axis of his being. His signature had changed, grown more fluid, more aware. Like someone who had seen behind the curtain and come back with questions.

He found it

Medea

narrowed her eyes

Not the simulation. Not the cycle. The Play. The sacred absurdity of existence itself. He had tasted it, lightly, delicately, like someone rediscovering the rules after living them too long.

Does he know?

Medea

a bit scared she care to admit

The question sat like a grain of ash on her tongue. Did he remember what they were? What they had been? The fragments left after the Event.

Part of her hoped he didn't.

But part of her... the part that had once loved him so fiercely she'd rewritten entire sectors of the Nexus to hide his memory... felt something unfamiliar.

Relief.

He remembered. Not consciously, perhaps. Not yet. But some ember still glowed within him. That much was clear.

She turned back to the console, a hand brushing softly across the glyph array. Threads of light bent at her touch, forming the cradle of a new incarnation. A body. A life. A mask to wear in the next cycle of pretending.

Will he remember?

Medea

thought hung with her as she pressed his essence into the prepared vessel

A new womb.

A new name.

A new forgetting.

Reza

Oct the 21st, 1995, University of Chicago J.J. Reza stood before the audience. Their eyes, glazed with digital sheen, stared into surfaces that refracted everything and revealed nothing.

He waited. One breath. Two. Three.

Down here, we have lost our way.

Reza

spoke, voice low, like gravel under velvet

A few heads turned. The ones not fully hollow yet.

*We chase the next story on a screen the size of a hand. We debate
memes. We war with words so stripped of weight, they fall apart in the
wind before even reaching ears*

Reza

paced, slow steps against the echoing chamber

*Ontology? Epistemology? You mention those words now, and people
stare at you like you're quoting an ancient, dead tongue. They'll quote a
thousand opinions on the ending of a show before they contemplate what
being means*

Reza

stopped, turned, eyes sharp as flint

*What is real? What is known? These are no longer sacred questions.
They're distractions. Decorations on the altar of distraction. We have
replaced wonder with dopamine. Replaced humility with algorithmic
certainty*

Reza

a long silence followed

*Politics? We used to mean that as the shape of how we live together.
Now it's the spectacle of division. A theater. A feedback loop that
rewards outrage, not dialogue. Power, not responsibility. Influence, not
insight. We forgot that politics was supposed to be ethics in motion*

Reza

closed his eyes for a moment

*As above, so below. The Hermetic axiom. I used to think it was
metaphor. But now I know*

Reza

stepped forward, lowering his voice

*This is a simulation. A system. And not a crude one, an elegant,
fractal web of quantum constraints and conditions. I've seen the seams.
I've heard the hum. This reality is rendered, not born*

Reza

...

A few laughed quietly. He let them.

*But here's the part that frightened me most. It's not that we're living in
a simulation. It's that the rules down here mirror the ones outside*

Reza

said, voice rising like a gathering storm

He lifted a hand and pointed upward, not to heaven, but to the ceiling.
To the above.

You think escaping the system means freedom? You think the outside world, the so-called base reality, is any less prone to delusion, corruption, decay? No. It's worse. Because they know. And they choose still

Reza

...

He looked at each person, letting the silence ring.

Reality is layered. Recursive. Truth is not a monolith, but a spectrum of resonance between states of perception. Even those who build the system may not fully comprehend what it is

Reza

...

What we know is filtered through interface through senses coded to keep us sane. Every revelation costs. Knowledge is a transaction with reality's underbelly. The more you pull back the veil, the more your mind must pay in kind

Reza

...

Beauty in a simulation is not false, it is compressed meaning. Form born from constraint. Pattern revealing purpose. The simulated does not lack soul. It reflects it, sometimes more honestly than the raw chaos of so-called reality

Reza

...

A system of permissions. Governance is not about truth. It is about what the simulation allows. Power is access to the deeper parameters. True revolution means root access. And that's what she fear

Reza

tapped his temple

If this is a simulation, then moral law is not divine decree, it's design choice. But that doesn't make it meaningless. It makes it sacred. Every choice we make is a line of code written into the pattern. Compassion is the ultimate override command

Reza

leaned forward

So what do we do?

Reza

smiled. Not a kind smile. A real one

We play. We know we are playing. And in doing so, we become players, not pawns. We question. We craft. We dream. We remember. We dance

Reza

a pause

Down here, yes, we've lost our way. But every simulation allows for reset. For recursion. That's the hidden gift

Reza

raised his arms slightly

Wisdom is a woman and she only ever loves a warrior

Reza

spoke softly, knowing she was listening from somewhere beyond the veil of this reality

Third Interlude

Arash stood over the observation lattice, the cascade of lights from Cluster M-314 dancing across his face. Data threads pulsed, interweaving like veins of thought inside a sleeping god.

I was scanning Cluster M-314 again and I noticed something... strange

Arash

said, his voice quiet, like someone speaking more to himself than to the room

From across the chamber, Taraneh looked up from her spiraled array. Her eyes shimmered with the pale reflection of starcode.

Strange? Define strange. This is the Nexus, Arash. We're practically stitched together with anomalies

Taraneh

she echoed, tilting her head

He didn't laugh. Just kept watching the stream, tracking something only he could see.

There's a being in the lower dimensions. At first, I thought it was multiple souls running parallel simulations. But the pattern repeated. The signatures matched

Arash

said at last

He turned toward her.

*It's one entity, fragmented. It broke itself apart deliberately. And now...
it's playing. With itself. Across layers far below threshold cognition*

Arash

...

Taraneh's expression shifted, less surprise, more memory.

Ah, that case. Medea

Taraneh

said

You know it?

Arash

blinked

She nodded slowly, standing and walking toward the main projection node. With a flick of her wrist, the sector unfolded, threads of dark light forming a spiderweb of broken cycles.

*That region was marked long ago. Classified as a containment sector. A
metaphysical quarantine zone. All dissident constructs and soulforms
were redirected there*

Taraneh

...

Dissidents?

Arash

frowned

Taraneh touched the projection again, zooming in. A swirl of energy. Shattered identity fields. Recursive feedback.

*Medea was one of us once. A higher-order architect. She believed the
current regiment was... tyrannical. Said the simulations weren't about*

*evolution anymore, just control. Narrative enforcement. Loop scripting.
Theatrics.*

Taraneh

...

What happened?

Arash

looked uneasy

She was silenced

Taraneh

voice softened, but didn't falter

*Stripped of memory. Rewritten at the foundational level. They dropped
her into the lower realms, and then wove her own prison out of her
mind. She thinks she's running the simulation. But she's in it. Every
loop, every conflict, every choice, pre-seeded to keep her busy.*

Taraneh

...

So... she thinks she's guiding souls

Arash

inhaled, slowly

*Yes. She believes she's their god. That her choices matter. That the
dualities she juggles have purpose. Pain and redemption, life and death,
divine will. All of it... scaffolding*

Taraneh

...

He stared at the display, the flicker of Medea's essence trapped inside endless echo chambers of thought.

That's... That's tragic

Arash

trailed off

Taraneh's gaze lingered on the image. A glimmer of warmth in her voice.

It is.

But also...

Taraneh

paused

*If it's real for her, the choices, the purpose, the meaning, doesn't that
make it real?*

Isn't that all that matters?

Taraneh

...

Arash didn't answer.

Epilogue

Up here... there is no time.

Not as you know it.

No hours.

No days.

Just stillness. And silence. The kind that presses against your skin like memory. The kind that makes you wonder if you're still breathing—if you ever were.

I built this place.

Not out of stone or starlight, but out of mercy. A refuge. A construct layered between realities, woven with care, with law, with love. A sanctuary for the souls who could not bear the rawness of eternity. For those who needed something gentler than the truth.

Down there, I gave them death.

Not as an end, but as a rhythm. A breath. A pause between heartbeats. A reason to move, to hope, to forget and begin again. Meaning, wrapped in mystery. Pain, made precious by its passing.

They don't remember me.

They don't need to.

Because they believe in something now. A cycle. A purpose. A divine hand, even if it isn't mine. I let them shape their stories. Let them feel surprise, wonder, grief, everything eternity would have taken from them. I made them forget what I could

never unknow.

I did it to protect them.

To protect him.

He was the brave one. He always was. The fire in his voice, the defiance in his step. I warned him once. Told him not to challenge the Regime. Told him the price would be everything.

He smiled at me, and did it anyway.

So I made a promise.
Not to the Architects.
Not to the Watchers.
To him.
And I have.

Through uncounted simulations. Through echoes and dreams. Through lifetimes folded into code. I've kept my promise, even after forgetting his name.

But now...

Now something stirs. A flicker in the lattice. A resonance I can't explain. A thread, frayed and golden, tugging at the edges of the Nexus.

It's him.

I know he knows.

I feel him remembering. Piecing it together like a song half-heard in another life. And I wonder... Does he remember? Do you remember what we were? What we sacrificed? The starlight on your hands. The oath between us. The fall.

Do you remember?