

Omnipresent

Note: this story contains TF, MtM, and...that's it, actually. This is just a standard TF story made for TF-Stories' Secret Santa for 2020. Merry Christmas to all that read this, especially the recipient, killer095!

December 25: Christmas day. A time of unrequited mirth, joy, and cheer for the millions who celebrate it. And why wouldn't millions be happy? It was one of the few times of the year that you get to see someone's face light up in excitement when they get just what they wanted, and vice versa. I have vivid memories of my childhood, all my family gathering in the living room, stretching out our gift exchanges so that they were twice as long as they should have been. I, being so young, was never the best at crafting a gift nor did I have any money to buy anything, so what presents I did give left much to be desired. Despite that, my relatives graciously accepted them all the same. Even as I grow older, the angelic lights of my street's Christmas displays and the feasts we would prepare every year remain firmly implanted into my mind.

Which is exactly why I chose to not celebrate Christmas this year. Sure, my memories were some of the best of my childhood, but they were just that - memories. My family had grown older and our Christmas celebrations waned in spectacle every year until eventually, we just stopped caring. For me, Christmas just rang hollow, now that I was living on my own, with no one to really give presents to anymore. Now, having said all that, what was a man to do?

The sweltering heat of the desert was seeping into my mind, but I was set on being as conservative as I could. Being wasteful was the last thing I wanted to do in the middle of a desert, so I didn't even think about drinking from my thermos just yet. Not when the pyramids were within sight!

You may be wondering: *Why was my idea of a Christmas vacation a harsh trip through the middle of Egypt?* Truth be told, I just wanted a change of scenery. Snow was never my style, and I just wanted something else to look at. Plus, the sheer scale and imposing look of the pyramids. Unlike the buildings I was surrounded with for my entire life, there wasn't much to them, but that was most of the appeal to me. As the structures came into closer view, I picked up my pace, trying not to go too fast as to conserve energy. As a result, it still took a while, but I was rewarded in due time by the truly breathtaking spectacle that laid before me. Sure, they weren't much to look at by themselves, but the history of it all washed over me. The blinding, uniform pale yellow color indicated nothing but an aura of mysteriousness, one that intrigued me. I would've gone inside, but my constitution was too weak to find out. Instead, my eyes were drawn to a small pot near the back of one of the pyramids. I quickly picked the thing up. Inspecting it further, I could clearly tell that it was an urn, and shaking the contents inside led me to believe it had some sort of powder (likely someone's ashes). I instinctively looked around myself, checking to see if there was anyone else here. Unsurprisingly, there weren't. That's

strange, I would've expected someone else to be touring around the place. I mean, they say it's a small world...

Crunch! I felt the urn slip out of my admittedly sweaty hands and make an ear-piercing crash towards the sand, which was weirdly harder than I was expecting. I flinched at what I had done as I couldn't look away at the rubble. Judging from the long-grayed dust, that was clearly someone's ashes. Oh no...

Yet, these ashes didn't stay still for long. Soon, the dust began to swirl around, the particles congealing into one being. I couldn't even feel any wind around. In fact, by the way it weaved around without any pattern, I would've assumed that this thing had a mind of its own. Soon, the dust soon began to circle around me, like I was its Sun, perpetually speeding up until I was practically enveloped in it. I squinted as bits of the powder went into my eyes, but that was soon interrupted by a distorted, booming voice calling out to me.

"Who dares interrupt my slumber?" the voice barked.

"Uh, I did?" I meekly responded. I was in a corner here, so that was all I could say. If I was a little more courageous I would've brought up that what it said was very cliché and done before, but my life was on the line, so I tried to keep my mouth shut.

"To that I say: thank you!" the voice said, this time considerably less threatening (yet still loud). *"The spirit of the sphinx lives on!"*

"The spirit of the what now?" I asked.

"Did you not notice the empty void where my presence had resided?"

"Um, I didn't..."

"Then why did you release me?"

"My hands slipped..." I heard a sigh from this presumed spirit at this point.

"No matter, any host is a good host..."

I was getting worried at this point. What did it mean by host? Was it going to possess me? Actually, that last question was pretty stupid, because that's exactly what the spirit did, entering through my eyes, nose, mouth, even the crevices underneath my fingernails. Urgh, even the thought of that was disturbing...

Other than feeling violated, I was feeling very strange. On top of me feeling like my mind was being invaded, my muscles were tensing up, seemingly wanting to burst out of my skin. I strained myself as hard as I could, desperately trying to get a grip at what was happening to me. My skin, while not bursting like an overfilled balloon, was definitely growing, bulking up to massive proportions. The ground quickly seemed like it was invisible with how high I was looking down. In fact, my height almost surpassed that of the pyramids themselves. Obviously, my clothes did not take too kindly to this sudden growth spurt, and promptly tore themselves into a million little tatters, scattering away. On top of even that, my body was seemingly changing shape. I noticed this first with my hands, as two sets of fingers were merging; all the bone matter, nerve endings, and muscle fused together to form appendages that resembled paws more than anything else. I also noticed a layer of fur was starting to grow, starting where my now paws were. It wasn't too thick, but the tingling feeling in my pores was enough to make me itch, which

was now a whole lot more cumbersome thanks to my changed paws. By this point, my arms had also changed significantly, with them lengthening considerably, even past my face when I held it up close.

“What are you doing to me?” I yelled, half because I was panicking and half because my voice was that much more booming. Perhaps that came from how positively deafening the spirit’s voice was.

“I am channeling my form to override your current body! Soon, my wealth of power will teem within you!” the voice promised, only slightly answering my question.

My torso was next to be affected. Surprisingly, it started to thin out, at least compared to the bulk of my arms and hands. That did not mean the muscle in these parts was not raging, far from it. In fact, the spasms near my shoulders and hindquarters were so strong, my mind could barely even think straight. Moving towards my legs, they were also thickening. My thighs and calves seemed to shorten, but compensated with their added bulk. My feet also underwent much of the same changes as my hands, with them stretching out to be longer than the entire length.

Surprisingly, my head wasn’t affected all too much. Aside from it growing, which was par for the course at this point, the only thing that significantly changed was that my hair was receding into my scalp. At least that was painless, and as soon as it finished, something else was quickly forming in its place. I could feel my shoulders being weighed down a bit by what looked like gold, wrapping itself at the back of my head. It seemed like a headdress! And with my shoulders being weighed down, my head was also pulled back, my bones cracking with stiffness for a few moments as my chest grew deeper, and my neck more perpendicular to my torso, decidedly looking much more bestial.

I closed my eyes for a few seconds, and felt the tension and pain start to subside as I fell down to all fours. Now that I wasn’t feeling endless, hard-to-describe pain, I could appreciate what the changes brought to me. My limbs were flowing with energy and youth, despite me being half-occupied by a being that had to be thousands of years old. I was feeling much more limber, like I could do anything!

“I assure you, mortal, nothing can stop you now! You can do anything!” the voice was egging me on.

“How did you know what I was thinking?”

“It is simple. Consider me a visitor in your mind. I do not wish to override your spirit. I see that great things can come from a mind like yours!”

“Wow! In that case...”

Suffice to say, I could really do anything. Even if it didn’t even make sense for a being like me to do, I could do it! I was soaring through the skies and could hear the faint, but freaked out cries from onlookers below, because of what I could only assume was some spirit power that I didn’t catch from the spirit. Oh yeah, the spirit was definitely like a visitor. One that wouldn’t shut up about his day (or in this case, his millennium). I would reproduce what he said, but to be honest, I wasn’t even listening. All his ramblings went in one part of my mind and out the other.

Knowing what he can do, he probably knew this as much as I did, but I guess he just wanted to vent. I wasn't too bothered, though. I could probably tune it out by the sounds of the roaring winds. But I wasn't flying for flying's sake, though. I had somewhere I needed to go, some place that was nagging at the back of my mind for me to go to...

Crash! I heard the tiling of my roof crumble like wet tissue paper. What, did you expect me to travel the world or something? Actually, I was - I guess I didn't want to leave anyone I knew in the dark. A gaping hole was placed there, but I didn't care anymore. It wasn't like I was going to live here anymore, let alone have anything of use.

"W-w-wh-what's h-hap-happening?" the voice of my housesitter, Julian, struggled to compose a sentence.

"Sorry about that. I still haven't gotten used to this body yet. I guess I don't know my own strength." I introduced myself. Julian's face was still colored purple, whether it be from shock or some other emotion I have yet to quantify. *"Okay, it's a long story and it involves magic, or spirits, or whatever...but,"*

And then Julian fainted.

"Oh. I guess I'll talk to you later."