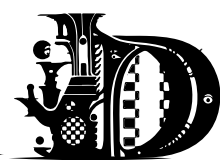




OMNIPOTENT INGENUITY



arilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

That was all the gargantuan visitor said after it arrived through a fissure in space and abruptly appeared in the middle of the world. A

portal, not so different from a mirror in the sky, appeared without warning, reflecting back the lands before expanding outward to its city-breadth ends as an enormous halo of reflective boundaries. Like an asteroid falling through a chute, the ultra-mega being crashed down, obliterating everything around it—all was displaced and decimated, with the tallest buildings being torn from their foundations and sent sprawling. Chunks of stone and metal were flung great distances, expanding the deadly carnage for many miles. Millions were instantly killed; the wake of destruction was vast and utterly harrowing. Once settled in its nest of ruin, the being spoke:

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

The creature stood over ten thousand feet tall and, with mortal eyes, could not be fathomed in all of its deplorable form. Its color was black—black like death and black like nothingness. It loomed as a void of color rather than a color itself. It had many mouths—too many to count—from which it boomed its words. These mouths were caverns of gross malady from which spewed vehement clumps of acidic filth—violet, putrid sludge that burned through flesh and earth, incinerating its way deep underground where it fell. Upon the creature, there were no arms or hands that appeared to reach; there were no legs or feet that appeared to shuffle or transport. This World-Scarrer stood solely as a massive pillar, dealing in demise and devastation.

Beyond its immense size, its innumerable mouths, and its anti-color, only but its sound—the most accursed feature of its presence—was perceivable: an echo, a percussion, and a mental rape to all who stood or lay or hid; not a wall dense

enough and not a depth deep enough existed to impede the coursing vehemence of voice that rang in consistency of decibels. Man, woman, child, and animal was scathed by the waves of catastrophic sound at all ends of the world. Miscarriages were absolute for every pregnancy—the sick vibrations sterilizing all female beasts. Even infants perished under the duress of the vicious and violating cadence of

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

The future of known life—the life of the world—was threatened with extinction. There was not a power capable of harm worthy enough to obliterate the monstrosity. Nothing could cease its fiendishness—nothing could even wound it; it was indestructible. It withstood every force as it chanted those three words:

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

It was believed that the World-Scarrer was the bringer of the apocalypse—that its sole purpose was to end all life on the planet, which it would have, had it remained irrevocably. This was a horrible speculation—of course validated by the repercussions of its presence—but there was, however, one truth immediately certain at the time of its arrival that inflicted an air of insidious agenda: it was not speaking gibberish or alien words—it was speaking my name. Out of the endless variations of monikers possible for declaration, it was mine that was perfectly announced in clarity of sound and pronunciation, measure and breadth—an orchestration of letters and partitions that exclusively belonged

to the twelve-year-old girl that was me.

I remember sitting in school, listening to my teacher speak on the subject of historical gods and goddesses when my three-part name rattled the ears and innards of my classroom.

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

It was so numbingly caustic that everyone dropped to the floor, petrified and bewildered. Two classmates erupted into violent convulsions while many others brutally vomited. There was no coincidence of the sound simply replicating my name—it was my name—and when I heard it, I knew there was some terrifying call on my being. Whether by some mysterious wardship in owning the name or by some psychological acquiescence of the call upon me, I was the only person seemingly unaffected by the inescapable sound. I was the only one still sitting in my chair, unmoved by the accursed emanation. And so, in this moment, and in the eyes of everyone there sharing this room of learning, I, too, was the evil.

I heard many outlandish accusations of my role in this nightmare before that day was through: pacts with astral deities, mastery of astrological witchcraft, admission to fifth-circle starmancy. They had every right to place these hellish crowns upon my head. They did not know it immediately then, but it was my name that had dropped the world to its knees. Many died when the monumental creature crashed down, but those deaths were pitilessly irrelevant compared to the nefarious seizure of mankind’s proliferation. The world had never suffered a greater wound than this, and with my name as a signatory, I was due the penalty of blame.

That was the last day of school; it was the last day of many things. The world was thrust into panic and disarray. Governments, societies, and families all fell apart. There was no way to conduct business or take care of the day’s needs when nearly every fifteen minutes a sound expropriated all strength and focus, driving a tidal wave of dissonance from ears to bowels. There was no shopping, only taking. There was no sleeping, only stupefaction. There were no funerals for the dead. There was not a soul that had not been driven to some form of madness, and no matter how far away people travelled in attempts to escape the pandemonium, the purveyor of extinction—the World-Scarrer—would be right there with them, roaring into their essences the infamous words.

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

Not a living thing went within thirty miles of the World-Scarrer—the range of its regurgitated spews. The land it rested upon was desolate and riddled with caverns of melted ground. The sky around it was tainted and spoiled—an expanding dark purple haze with clouds as nothing more thin wisps of stringy, black filtrates.

It was at the edge of this forbidden zone—with the megalithic creature perched against the rotting horizon—that I stood, gazing into the bizarre scene ahead. This would be the final length of my journey. I was equipped with a twenty-five-pound pack of food, water, and equipment. Surrounding me was a company of soldiers—those assigned to find and drag me to the otherworldly behemoth had I been unwilling to cooperate. But I was willing—I was even eager. Strangely, it was I who was

hindered by them, awaiting their reorientation after the accursed sound ravaged their beings.

The world, with all of its might, was forced to run while a twelve-year-old girl was thrust forward to save it. Only the last remnants of organized military were able to pursue my whereabouts and aid me in the quest. I held a wicked burden, but while the declaration of my name brought death and morbid fear to all corners of the planet, it gave me a strange sense of encouragement and passion—a pride for a role that only I could fulfill.

As I marched through the final miles of the desolate grounds of the World-Scarrer's bed, I found myself haunted. The empty streets and the resonating of my name cursing the air assaulted me for the first time with a sinking heart and a deep horror that caused my mind to quiver and tormented my thoughts. I realized then that my dreams and ambitions had been as obliterated as the structures and terrain around me. My future was the leviathan of absurd infamy blotting out the sky; there was nothing for me until I first faced its demands. There was no sense in caring for my family, or anyone for that matter. I was different than anyone else. No one else possessed the absolute and diabolical brand of Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel. I was worth more than a million fortresses of gold. I was more important than the most powerful figures of the world. No one and nothing mattered as much as I did. What verity that was to realize—it held an uncanny stature of glory that twisted my brief stint of terror into triumph as I trod forward through the ghost lands.

Three days and two nights later, the thirty miles had been covered. I came into proximity of the World-Scarrer. I stopped

about five hundred yards from it—although even at that distance—in perspective—I appeared to be right up against it. The immensity of its breadth created night as it blocked out the sun and the majority of the horizon. I looked around and realized the soldiers were no longer with me. Either I had, in my deliberation, left them behind as they fought through the reckoning calls or they had, in fright, remained back for fear of losing their lives.

“There’s no sense stopping here,” a soldier said, stepping out into visibility, disproving the absence of my entourage. He had a thick brown beard and piercing blue eyes. Black and gray fatigues covered him from head to foot. “You need to get as close as you can—even touch the thing if need be—it has to know you’re here. I don’t know what the bastard is, but I sure as hell know you need to be right up against it—who knows if it even has any god-damned ears.” The soldier continued to walk towards me. “Come on, let’s get this over with. We have a world that wants to live.” On his next step a bullet slid through his head, just below his helmet, coming out below his nose and above his lips; he crumpled to the ground.

“Run! Run to it, you pube-less star worshipper!” a cracking voice shouted as a gunfight broke out between the mysterious executioner and the company of soldiers remaining in the shadows.

I dropped my pack and bolted as fast as I could towards the massive menace—the desired effect of the murder. There was no way to know if it was one of the soldiers who had lost his mind or some other renegade who had followed the outfit. Regardless, my sprinting did not cease until I was an arm’s reach from a monstrous wall of pulsating flesh. The blackness of its surfaces

was a moving, shifting coarseness of shadow. Minute ravines of vein churned liquid of immeasurable vastness—a vastness caused by color: the color of bottomless abyss. Once there, I screamed at the top of my lungs: “I am Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel! What do you want?” In response, it spoke:

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

At the very enunciation of the first syllable of my name, I was thrust towards the entity with unseen force. I extended my arms in front of me in reflex before I slammed into the outlandish skin. Like dough, the surface gave way to my momentum. Both of my arms and the side of my face sank into warm darkness before I was prevented from entering the mass any further. I was able to wriggle partially free before the tips of my fingers were tackled by a fierce suction that brought my arms back elbow deep into the being. There was then nothing I could do to writhe free; I was as solidly affixed to the beast’s frame as if my arms were locked in stone. A volcano of dread erupted within me. The World-Scarrer had called and I had come. This was the moment it had wanted, and now I was helpless to its unfathomable desires.

A moment later, my forearms and hands—and therefore the whole of me—was yanked with daunting speed upwards along the full contour and height of the abomination. Mind, body, and spirit petrified, I ascended the astonishing and horrendous heights of the World-Scarrer, traversing around the many mouths while growing colder and colder with the thinning atmosphere.

At the pinnacle of the creature’s form, I leveled off on a plateau and slid for an instance before the hold on my arms was

released. I careened into a thick forest of dark gray, chalky stalks that extended several hundred feet upwards; they bent as my momentum carried me into them. Powdery residue from the shoots caked my body and, as I quickly realized, provided me with much needed heat. My forearms and hands were consumed with glops of the World-Scarrer’s flesh and especially retained larger densities of the stalks’ dusty substance—so much that an almost unbearable heat sheathed them; these arm casings could not be removed.

When I climbed to my feet, I stood engulfed within the forest of stalks, seeing nothing but their shafts all around. Without knowledge of my purpose, I remained in place, surrounded by strange sounds and even more bizarre smells. Then the call of my name came once more.

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel.”

At its pronunciation, I was again displaced from my feet by an invisible power and sucked towards a location—this time further atop the plateau. I traveled several yards until the announcement of my name ended, at which time I was released by the imperceptible energy and left to tumble until what momentum was generated had ceased. Each time my name was called I was again wrenched forth at great speeds towards the destination.

Eventually, after a mixture of walking and being hauled, I reached a clearing where all I saw was void flesh. In the middle of this clearing was a twisted, oscillating globule—about four times the size of myself—hovering several feet in the air. The sphere was a repugnant, dull chartreuse and its surfaces were

filled with ravines and ridges that endlessly coagulated into varying topographies. I walked up to the globoid and saw that there were more profound traits suspended within it—organic gears of tissue and brain, portals of conversion and exchanging mass—but before I could fully investigate and understand those mysteries, the globule spoke my name.

“Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel,” it said in a raspy, guttural voice that I could perceive as different and separate from the resounding pummel of words that emanated from the goliath entity beneath my feet that very same moment. It had been this clandestine orb all along that spoke, and when it did, the incredible mass acted as an amplifier, giving a reach to the sound a billion times greater.

The same unseen force grasped me upon the declaration of my name, pulling me from my feet and plunging me directly into the globule—the true vile usurper of the world. Engulfed by the viscous continuity, I entered blindness—blindness not of sight, but of the ability to interpret what it was that was seen. It was neither shape nor color that encapsulated the vision of eye, and, as such, there was no way for my brain to lay a foundation for it within the residence of reason. My only understanding of what next occurred was construed by the inner ear; by its acute interpretation, I perceived that the globoid dropped—it fell down through the gargantuan pillar that was its grievous megaphone, slowly at first and then quickly, allowing the clutch of gravity to fully ensnare it. On the outskirts of the phantasmal imagery perplexing my mind, I was able to discern that as the globule plummeted through the black mass it sucked it within itself, disintegrating and absorbing it. When the end of the descent was reached, and the whole of the mega-entity was within the

spheroid glob, the thing itself then inverted and inserted itself into every opening upon my body—my eyes, my ears, my nose, my mouth, my rectum, my genitals, and even my pores.

By the time I was again able to see, there was nothing left of the World-Scarrer, the tower amplifier and its globoid announcer. Its legacy, however, was still clearly present, around me and within me. The dismal, ruined sky remained, and the rubble of the city only helped to speak of the accursed planet’s wound. My arms were burnt off at the elbows—only knobs of blackened tissue remained. Half of my face was also melted into a conglomeration of patched flesh—the side of my face that had been thrust into the repulsive, dark hide of the World-Scarrer when it first conjured our embrace. I was no longer a twelve-year-old girl; I was a bridge and a bay—a mold for the transference of matter from one realm to another.

I climbed to my feet and opened my cracked, misshapen mouth, stretching it to the limits of its hindered shape. Then, I began my new purpose. One by one, I whispered the names of the world. Those who bore them came to me not by their will, but by the invisible, unstoppable force of the call itself, made possible by the World-Scarrer’s supremacy now in my possession. Into me these captives of summoning would go, swallowed into the shifting enigma of the globule deity within me and relocated anew inside its domain.

When all of the world’s population had been sent to its new home, I still remained—I slowly, without end, walked about, from one place to another without need or desire or individual thought. Darilandria Alrindce Syabeltel was no longer the name of a being—it was the name of a world.

Entities with knowledge and authority beyond perception create—they imagine and they dream, and from these dreams they deliberate strange works. They do what is within their ability like a painter with a brush—like a sculptor with clay. And entities with knowledge and authority beyond perception are also perverted—they kill and they molest and from darkness entertain menacing deeds. It was all but a quip of omnipotent ingenuity.