A Brink of Oblivion

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*Chapter I*

*A man becomes aware of his own being in safety’s absence.*

Quietly, alone… *Thud…Thud…Thud.* The grandfather clock in a standstill, staring capriciously directly at Mr. Kurten. Hair, lying flat upon his head; eyes blue and agile; he stands with the straight stature of a working Russian man. Today is just a normal Monday for Mr. Kurten: wake up, walk downstairs, drink his morning Joe, eat, walk up stairs, get dressed, brush teeth, and leave for work at after grabbing his mail. But he found something he hadn’t expected in his mail on this day; something that would keep him from going to work today - and maybe ever again…

In the morning traffic of St. Petersburg, Mr. Norovsky often gets angry at the slightest of things… Loud, cacophonous noises, beaming red lights flashing everywhere… it’s the opposite of what he wants to deal with every morning- a tall, broad man of 6’4” stature with a long black beard that catches every drop of coffee he spills while slamming on the brakes. Barely fitting in his 2 door sudan that he only drives to save for a new diesel truck, he reaches for a phone call he has been waiting for… one to take him away from this wretched place…

Setting down the Harvard Novel for feminist studies, Mrs. Lovas sat on her Islamic ottoman: silence. Nothing but her dark figure glaring mindlessly at the bright, blinking answering machine on the nightstand that lay squared to the mahogany bedposts. Silence - except for the message that remain waiting for her, and at that, one that may have been better unanswered…

Snoring, the bearded man, a lugubrious, unmotivated individual, nearing a fatal unconsciousness is awakened by a large pounding awakens him in a cold, dead sweat. With an unmoved motion, Pastor Theist, or rather Mr. Theist, darted his shaded eyes in a quick, steady motion. “The blasted…?” A snake lye slithering at his feet, eyes red with a burning passion - a passion deep with remorse and revenge. With a start, the pastor eyes the serpent and releases a stone in its direction, a complete miss. With accuracy like that, one may say the pastor has an unpleasant future...

Philosophers are the only true comprehenders of human life. Dr. Thinkwell, a well thought, complex man, sits sternly. On a normal night, such as this, a man would be with family, or with loved ones - but to Thinkwell, Christmas was just another night. However, his views may come back to hurt his ideas of the “perfect” universe…

*Chapter II*

*Blindly, man chooses love over life by giving love a meaning.*

“An honor it is to meet you all,” remarks the pastor in a matter-of-fact sort of tone. “Welcome to my home.”

Mr. Kurten was surprised by the letter in the mail, and how forward the remarks were;

**Dear Mr. Kurten,**

**It would be an honor if we could have you…**

**Signed,**

**Pastor Theist**

And, with an almost certainty, Kurten left to ascertain the reasoning behind such a complex letter. “How did the rest of you receive your invitation?” questioned Kurten before the church doors. Almost with an immediate roar and unnatural tone, Mr. Norovsky exclaimed his call he had claimed earlier that week. “So queer… an odd way of communication.” Dr. Thinkwell remained quiet, still questioning the reasoning behind his invitation. “Well?” Mr. Norovsky asked with his exasperating, large, ignorant eyes. Still no reply other than the gleaming eyes staring upon the wooden doors that remain closed.

The doors open - enter. “Welcome to my home.”

“Why were we initiated into this building you call holy?” said Thinkwell, in a rude, sacrilegious way. After a brief blundering blunder of words, the pastor remains calm with a reply of, “You will know soon enough.” Without as much of a hesitation, the priest backs away, suspiciously, and vanishes behind the corridors that lead into the pantry, and he is gone, for now…

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With a jussle and a jolt, Mr. Norovsky reconciles himself and re-briefs what had happened that led him up to the point he was at now. A wife, kids, all left his side because of the condition he was in. First came the drinking… Nevermind that! he thought. Do not think of her and her beauty… and the kids. A sudden tear came to his soul and glistened under the thousand suns that shine on the life of the living. He had a sudden thought about self worth, and when he would end it; every human has a time, and his, it seemed, could be ended under his own control, but he knew the will was not there - he knew he would have to leave it to fate. What is a man but a mammal with consciousness, and what is consciousness without the self-righteous denial that the individual is important to an all-seeing eye. And the children…

Given the complexity of the situation, Dr. Thinkwell saw it appropriate to climb the stairway to the next room; what is life but a series of rooms? One may think that life is more, but is it? We are surrounded by the socioeconomic status that describes the first class world we are present in, but is life truly more? I must not ponder any longer… not after the accident. Thinkwell was dying for a glass of water, a glass that could fill his last self - a liquid that could extinguish his inner being.

Mrs. Lovas pardoned herself to the washroom after feeling claustrophobic in the concealed, congested pathway to the sunday morning meal. Her uncanny, watery eyes lie dormant in the everlasting appearance that be herself. Later: crying. A wail, and she wept. the people from before, she could have saved them… their crying eyes, much like her own; the same eyes that have driven her to her isolation. People hurt. Lives hurt; but deaths hurt worse. Is it not odd, the concept of empathy? Through social strategies, humans have trained themselves this art that bewilders the animal world, and why? Mrs. Lovas peers into the lives of those she lost, and those she lost for others, and her soul weakens into an unstable oblivion, because for her, life cannot “go on”...

Mr. Kurten runs after the pastor immediately while the others are left behind. A creak and a laugh are all he hears from the corridor that lengthens what seems the span of life. Door after door, he reaches; entering and leaving, all empty until he reaches a room with a dove standing still, looking at the door; all in tact, with the exception of its eyes… What the…? Is all he can get out before a closet door opens instantly and out comes one hundred starving, eyeless doves determined to get one last meal. The scream is so loud that everyone hears- all running back as fast a possible to the main chapel to see who shed that shriek.

“What was that!” yelled Dr. Thinkwell, showing the least bit of sympathy in his voice, but still intrigued. “That was Mr. Kurten, I think his name was” said Mrs. Lotas, with a suspicious monotone voice that left everyone looking at her weirdly. ‘Aren’t girls supposed to be more sympathetic and emotional’ thought the pastor, only going off what he had heard from previous women’s counseling on Saturday afternoons. “Well, lets go see what happened” Said Mr. Norovsky, leading the way to the origin of that deathly shriek. Once they got there, they realized things couldn’t be worse. There lie 101 doves, gnawing at the motionless Kurten capriciously while the others lie in complete and utter shock.

“What is this!” Yelled Mr Norovsky with a booming voice “Why are these here?!” “Uhmm, I honestly couldn’t tell you, I have never seen those in my life” Uttered the stagnant pastor still looking at the scene. “Why did you bring us here?” “Well, um, I’m not supposed to tell you that…”

“Well you better start speaking or you’re going to end up like that there Mr. Kurten.”

“Well, you see, I had gotten word from persons that each of you knew that you weren’t acting normal… like you were depressed” ‘and maybe even suicidal’ the Pastor almost said but figured he should watch his mouth.

“ I am not depressed!” Everyone uttered at once in a devillish tone.

After some arguing, they all dismissed the situation and carried about talking to the pastor as expected- but no one forgot the scene they had witnessed. It just seemed so suspicious, not that there were doves, because they could have been from a wedding, but that none of them had eyes… What does that mean? Is someone behind this?

*Chapter III*

*A true creature cannot realize its own existence until it realizes it is just a creature .*

Later that day, Mr. Norovsky stormed off after a brutal two hour long counseling with the Pastor. He went to cool off in one of the side rooms of the church, and found a room at a nice, brisk 20 degrees. Sitting there in complete silence, he heard some rustling nearby, and went to investigate. Deep down, he thought maybe someone did plant those doves there and is now after him. Getting closer to the origin of the rustling, and getting as scared as a man of that bruteness can get, he peers around a corner of a room and...

‘Stop doing that to yourself !‘ he thought, continuing into the room to find that is was simply blinds rustling in the wind because the window was open. ‘Whew,’ he couldn’t help but think as a he turns around to see a prodigious cross falling onto him, the side hitting him clear on the head knocking him unconscious, and maybe dead.

After two, maybe three hours, the others get suspicious. They decide to go looking for Mr. Norovsky. Calling for him with no answer, they get worried. After twenty minutes and starting to hyperventilate, they find him, blood trickling from his head, dead on the floor.

Oddly, the mood almost gets lighter, either because they didn’t like Mr. Norovsky, they are happy they weren’t the ones who were hit in the head, or maybe even because they know they are next. Life is so hard...Why go through such a hard life when it is all meaningless anyway? Sure the Pastor believed in God and believes his life is meaningful, and Mr. Kurten, Norovsky, and Lovas had no clue whether life was inherently meaningless or not, but why go through such terrible experiences when there is a quick means to an end… no familial mourning… no pain… just a quick and painless death. Sure, when you really look deep down into the inner works of the brain, life doesn’t make sense. But on the surface - rather... in the cerebral cortex, they all were freaking out, not wanting to die, missing their families, and wanting to do anything from being the next to go.

The first step in dealing with murder- don’t put a target on yourself. Each person stated their case; it wasn’t very hard to do because all the others were still together, so the target went straight to the Pastor. The only thing he could do to defend himself was give reasoning why he wouldn’t kill anyone. Obviously, because he was a pastor; he knew he wouldn’t go to heaven if he killed someone… so they believed him. After many accusations and debates, they reached no conclusion. Their only choice was to stay put together and wait it out. Why not leave? Well, did they really *want* to leave?

*Chapter IV*

*Emotions: hardly understood, greatly practiced*

No. Deep down they didn’t. They were caught between their true emotions and their instinctive ones, and their true emotions won. After a while, they couldn’t stand each other, so much that they would rather split up and risk death than be together… No figurative and metaphorical foreshadowing here, because doesn’t it get old after a while? The pastor was the first to budge. What did he have to worry about? He didn’t kill anyone, and he had heaven to look forward to, a much better life than this one. So he goes to the organ practice room. What better way to cool off than playing some majestical music? He could only be there for twenty minutes though, because not all of the rooms were heated and it was the middle of the wretched Russian winter. After twenty minutes, he was cold, but satisfied. However, he was so into his music that he didn’t realize that someone had shut and locked the door from the outside… ‘This is my time to die, I guess… But who was it?’ he thought, nonchalantly playing his piano into his enlightening death.

The others didn’t even investigate his death… they knew. Thinkwell thought ‘I was right from the start, them damn feminists couldn’t deal with men, they just wanted to kill them all’ But he was fine with true feminism, and thought he could try to reason with her so he wasn’t the next to go. But she spoke first…

“Why you, why are you killing these people?”

“Why, I haven’t, I have been here the whole time, why would I ever kill anyone?”

Someone had to be lying.

Just then, the lights went out. Thinkwell heard a shriek, and when the lights turned back on, Lovas was there dangling from the ceiling of the chapel. What?... How? thought Thinkwell, doubting incessantly that he could be that out of his mind to be a ... killer.

*Chapter V*

*Irony is only truly understood at the end of a character’s life.*

Light - the only source not completely arbitrary on the scale of the cosmic world. The source was empowered on the side of the cold sweat of the one known as Dr. Thinkwell.

The pastor strolls in, a grim grin glares directly upon Thinkwell’s eyes. “How…” The fear begins to swell inside the philosophers chest, his life on the brink of the afterlife he never knew could exist - there are no atheists in the foxhole. In the second that near a lifetime, all life makes immediate sense, and a euphoria drowns the doctor is a rush of endorphins cast a shadow over the sight of Thinkwell’s eyes.

“I understand!,” Thinkwell exclaimed

The pastor remained unchanged and stood behind the body labeled Dr. Thomas Thinkwell. “What?”

“ I have figured it out, the meaning to life, fate vs. free-will, the essential meaninglessness that equates a meaningful afterlife… I have made the connection!”

The pastor gleams and gleans the enlightenment the individual has understood.

Thinkwell says, “We, as humans, should enjoy life, because of the inherent meaninglessness it has; we need to understand that with or without religion, any individual is the same as the other under the power of a divine entity of without one. One should acknowledge that life is worth living because that is the single known point to life. The only arbitrary point to life is the will to live like the only known force is the factor of light. In this absence of serenity, I now understand who I truly am as an individual, as I was so foolishly depressed in the life before this one; not the reincarnation, but before the life I begin today. Humans argue over love and life’s true and only way to be lived, but the entire truth is, life is to be only lived. I realize I am just a creature in the universe’s arbitrary plan that is lit by the only force that is not completely obsolete. We only understand the things we decidedly make up by the practice of performing them. A animal without the complications that are entirely human cannot understand the feelings a human encounters because it is not equip with the same program we are in the genetic series that is human. It is quite the same as the feelings of animals being transmitted into that brain of a human. Life is deterministic and only decided by the arbitrary ones and zeros that run the universe. Life is only truly happy in the presence of …”

“Hault!,” declares the pastor, “You’re ready.”

“For?,” questions Thinkwell.

And with the final words that Thinkwell understands, he is claimed by death in much the same way the others were claimed, with the final universal understanding.

The Pastor chuckles to himself, “He will now understand the true irony of life is that when one finally understands it, there time has came to perish the kiss of death. Life has a reason, and that reason is the path of life. This pathway is lit by the presence of no eternal being, but the powers that exist in the physical, and metaphysical world surrounding us. To be truly happy is the point of existence, and happiness can only be understood truly when one is on the brink of oblivion.”