

'Title'

Tshepang Mokwena- 2019121165

Years ago, I resolved to have chosen the title, as we all must do, of a book editor. The perfect job, at least I've come to believe, for any failed writer. Settling one beneath a veiled screen of anonymity, one might think the job contemptuous, but, behind veil, there is an entry to words of a different sort. One less scornful; less inclined to mock my limits. In my search for those who possess a fever tempered to give rise to story, I find myself reflected in writers possessing that burning desperation to create worlds with words so clear, as though sat in a window. While a comfort might prevail to those who ignore that which they couldn't be, I'm simply too awed by words and their truths to do so.

As requested, per the urge of the publishing house I work under, I'd been tasked with editing the novel of a debut writer. Due to the sudden nature of the proposal, I hadn't had time to read his manuscript -but I was instructed to meet with him immediately. That spurt of time, when editor meets writer, so filled with jitter it seems no story could ever pass through, is one of the most fascinating to experience. Just yesterday, as I met with Thomas, I had my most fascinating yet.

"I've written my mastery," he said to me.

"This is only your first novel, Thomas," I said back to him.

"Father once said I should spare no thought to how the boastful nature of my literary genius might affront those used to the ordinary, which designed to prove itself greater than could be, dares not to command," he replied.

And affronted, indeed, I was.

"The novel seems to be missing a chapter or two, I believe," I said to him.

"Oh, yes. I haven't yet completed the final chapter. I still find myself in that position where story, still forming, must take shape before me. That careful process, I think of it, in design, where one surrenders to the subject, after which chapters just appear, and mastery is formed," he replied.

"How would it be a masterpiece if not in its final form," I asked.

"Mastery lies within creation, you know that. When forming the whole, If careful with the individual aspects others do lack guard of, the work becomes something more. Something living. You're an editor, I'm sure you'd understand," he answered.

"I do," I said, customarily.

"I knew you would. The exact reason I specifically asked for you to be my editor," he said.

"I heard. And I have to say I had no idea why anybody might ever insist upon me for anything," I said.

"There's plenty reason why, but your dedication to word is quite enough. See word, immobile as they may be, find their ways of inhabiting, consuming, becoming. And the creators of both such things; the most devoured of creators. Deny its natural order, and it becomes someone else's," I heard as I looked away.

"I haven't written a word of my own in a near-decade," I said.

"I'm well aware. I read your novel back in school, and have come to be quite disheartened I haven't had the chance to read another. I suppose why I've read all the works you've edited," he said.

"All," I asked. "I suppose you must've enjoyed at least some of them," I said as I looked back.

I was met by a smirk.

"A waste, I believe Father would call it," he said.

"Waste?" I asked.

"Of that heat, of that passion, I read within it," he said.

I fell silent.

"What a wonder you'd written. One which set me upon that route of writing this very mastery I've concocted," he said.

More jittered silence.

"I've opted to use that burgeoning passion, once yours, and made it my own. Hopefully without the same reckless abandon," he said.

"What does my novel have to do with your mastery?" I asked.

"Everything," he remarked.

"I suppose you mean my editorial thoughts are this everything you speak of, but I must say that is quite the exaggeration. I am only..."

"Oh, I need not just a thought," he said.

"What does that mean," I asked.

"Only that for the story to exist, I need merely more than a single thought," he scarcely answered.

"I'm afraid I've lost your meaning," I told him.

"What I mean is that you are the story," he said.

"Sorry, what is your novel about?" I asked him.

"It's about a failed writer who becomes a book editor," he said.

"I started it years ago, but I haven't yet picked a title. Perhaps you could help me with that," he added.