

The Master's Game

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Kapitel 5: Voiceless Screams

Something had woken her up. It was still dark and at first Roka had trouble remembering where she was. But then memories of a long and rather complex discussion about human literature creped back into her mind. That really had been weird, but somehow actually fun. Although the Master had some unsurprisingly twisted views on lots of topics.

There it was again. Roka couldn't identify it at first. It was like a vague indistinctive feeling of no origin. But as she woke up more it became clearer and clearer. It was a very faint sound inside her head. Like from everywhere at once. A low humming of some sort.

When she sat still and concentrated on the sound it got louder. An increasing and decreasing hum, or rather... a voiceless singing? She shook her head and snuck out of the room.

No one was there.

For a moment she was tempted to take a look at the Master's files, but the sound seemed to get a tiny little bit clearer and now it was like she could make out a direction.

Down... it came from below her. Roka was sure of it. Was it... calling her? It sounded so strange. Right inside her head and outside of it at once. Maybe she went crazy. Maybe the Master had poisoned her in her sleep, maybe... she shook her head. Whatever it was, there was no one around to stop her right now.

So she followed the sound through the halls. Through the darkness. The whole building seemed to be dark. She also couldn't see any guards. How strange. Maybe she should try and find the Doctor. Right now they probably could just sneak out and... No. She didn't have the keys. And those doors were thick and heavy. Even if she were able to find the place in this eternal darkness, she wouldn't be able to actually open the door.

After a while she stopped thinking about where she went. Maybe she was long lost. But a vague feeling told her she was heading in the right direction. Going down whenever she could.

Left... left again... right. Down again. Would she ever find the way back? How far into the ground did this building even reach? It felt like she was moving endlessly, right into the heart of the planet. Into the unknown, the abyss...

The sound got louder. She could hear it clearly now. Something was singing. Singing without a voice. Just humming a tune inside her head. A sad and lonely tune.

There was a glow in the distance. It felt like an eternity since she had last seen the corridors around her. Now she could make out the walls. They were made of thick metal and almost looked like the hull of a ship. Was she below the water? They were near the sea. It could be possible. It would also explain the strange lights that came from before her.

A door... or an opening. The light got brighter, the singing louder. There was a wall made of glass and behind it water. Dark and murky water filled with plants and rocks. Who would build a window to face rocks?

Someone was standing there, leaning his hand against the glass, watching the outside. A dark and foggy being. Like it had no substance. She couldn't make it out very clear. Her head was spinning from the sound inside. But still she had to get closer. It was calling... calling for her.

Roka reached the room and stood still. This wasn't a figure, it was the Master. He hadn't noticed her arriving. He probably couldn't even perceive her right now. If she just stayed quiet she could wait until he would be leaving and then... then what?

He turned around and faced her. Could he see her? Or was it just instinct? Sometimes people got a vague feeling of being watched, but still couldn't notice her. But no, it wasn't like that.

"How did you get down here?" His voice sounded surprised. "You can't have followed me. That was hours ago. How..."

"The voiceless singing lead me." Roka's head was spinning. She felt dizzy. It had gotten so loud it was hard to hear anything else. Her gaze got foggy. "It was... calling. I... I..." She stepped closer into the room. Towards the wall of glass, feeling the Master's eyes on her.

"You can hear it?"

"Of course I can. How could I not? It's so...loud. My head hurts. Where does it come from? What is this? Where... are we?"

"Below the sea. I tracked down a strange signal. The building was abandoned. And down here..." He looked back to the glass. "I can't hear it."

Roka looked surprised at him.

"Maybe you can only have one thing constantly ticking inside your head." He turned towards her. "You... don't look good. How does it feel? Does it say anything?"

"What? No... no it doesn't." She saw him stepping towards her, lying his hands around her head, but she was so dizzy, she couldn't fight it.

"Let me hear it." He put his forehead against hers and for a while stood still, completely silent. Was he reading her mind? Could he actually hear it now? Whatever he did, it felt weird and the singing slowly got accompanied by a strange rhythm. Like a faint drumming in the back of her head.

Then he let go of her.

Roka couldn't stand anymore and sank to her knees. It still got louder. Now it was resonating through her whole body and she could feel her heart pounding like mad. And now there was also the drumming.

"What did you do? Why did you...?"

"I was just listening. I can't hear it myself."

"It's driving me crazy. It gets louder and louder. What is it? Where does that rhythm come from?"

"What rhythm?" The Master crouched down before her, grabbing her by the shoulders. "Did it just appear? A rhythm of four? Does it sound like a drum?"

Confused she looked up to him and nodded. "It just appeared when you..."

He let go of her and laughed. "No... no. That can't be. You can't hear that." He looked almost as confused as Roka. "It's just an echo. Even if it were real. You're not psychic, and just a human... you can't..."

"What? What is it?"

"A curse." He stared at her. "Constantly, constantly in my head. It never stops, always calls."

The Master pulled her up and turned her towards the glass wall. What was she supposed to see? There was just rock and some plants and... Did the rock in front of her... move? It definitely did. And that... that wasn't a crack. It slowly opened and Roka gasped out of surprise.

It was a huge eye.

Now she could make out more details. What she had thought was a rock was actually skin. Thick gray... no, white skin. And there were veins. Bluish glowing veins were crossing the whole giant body, illuminating the room.

"Is that a... a whale?" The singing suddenly got louder. Painful, desperate. Now she understood. The creature was trapped down here. And it was screaming for help.

Roka felt rage boiling up inside of her. "Let it go." Her voice was cold.

"No."

She spun around and grabbed the Master by his jacket. "I don't care what your stupid plans are. Let it go!" The singing, the drumming, the pain in her head. It made her so angry. "I swear, I don't know what I'll do to you, if you don't."

A big grin spread on his face. He bowed down to her, staring directly into her eyes. "Careful little human." His face came even closer. "What will you do, eh? Staring me to death?"

Her head was spinning. Why was he so close? It made her mad. Her heart was pounding like it was about to explode. So close... She just wanted to... He grabbed her hands and loosened them from his jacket. Then he stepped back.

"I can't. Literally. I tried since I found it, but the glass is too strong and there is no god dam lock."

She was shaking. Everything was spinning. The Master turned back to her and came closer again.

"Promise to be nice and I will get rid of the signal for you."

"Just so? For what price?"

He grabbed her head, pressing his forehead against hers again. "This one is free. It would just make you mad. And then you're useless." He grinned meanly. "Focus on the sound... on both." She did. And after a few seconds they faded away. Slowly getting quieter until the silence pressed against her ears. She felt the hands letting go of her head and she stumbled back a few steps.

Roka stared at the Master for a second. He turned to the glass again. "Just in case you haven't noticed... it's alien. This kind of whale lays eggs that are filled with chemicals so deadly... It's fascinating how they can hatch out of that stuff."

Roka laughed suddenly. "For a moment it almost seemed as if you wanted to free the poor creature. But you just want to use it."

"Hey, I will set it free afterwards. There is no fun in killing creatures that can't think. Also, those are extremely rare. Whoever caught it probably was after a lot of money. I could sell it."

Her head was still hurting. She looked into the big sad eye and stepped to the glass, laying her hand and forehead against it. "It was crying for help... poor creature. I can't help you."

"You can." The Master stepped beside her, laughing softly. "I bet the Doctor would love this. In helping me freeing the whale you will also grant me a terrifying weapon. What a dilemma. I should tell him."

"I told you, I don't care about earth as much as he does. But this singing. This cry. It was so... sad and lonely. I can't leave it here." She turned around to face him. "Fine, I'll help. But we're still enemies. And I will still find a way to free the Doctor."

He bowed down to her. "And the moment you think you triumphed... I will fill these eyes with true fear. That's a promise."