



The boy wakes up alone in the morning gray of the empty room's one large broken window. His eyes are thick with dust, which he reflexively tries to wipe away, which only rubs the dust covering his hands into his eyes, which makes his eyes water. There is dust everywhere, on everything, a centimeter thick and soft and undisturbed like fresh snow.

When his eyes clear he sits up, then stands, and the dust gathers in the folds and creases of his young, too small body. The boy walks to the broken window and looks out. Nothing. Nothing stands. Nothing moves. The gray sky blends with

the gray of the ground, a film of rubble that covers every inch until it meets the horizon, smoothed in his eyes by the distance to this high, lonely perch.

He notices only now, awakened by a dry wind, that he is naked. He turns and surveys the room. Only the bed. No clothing. No clue as to where he is, who he is, or why this building is the only thing that seems to exist in this monochrome world.

Nothing except the note he sees taped to the door, written in a shaky hand.

I'm sorry. I had to wake you up but I

couldn't take you with me. I'm sorry to leave this place to you. I couldn't bear to see the betrayal in your eyes when I showed you your future. In the next room there is still enough dry food and water for you to make your own decisions.

He walks back to the window and looks down at the slate desert. At the foot of the building, broken in two over a slab, is a body.

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