

July 10th, 2008

7:35 am

It hardly seems important that today I am another day older, in the face of how many times I have repeated this exact date, even occasionally down to the very year.

And yet, I find myself craving quiet solitude and reflection.

I've let Neville and the others know I will be back in time for tonight's celebration.

I... have regrets that I prefer my alone time when, for every other birthday, we make a day of it. I know it's not to the other's preference. Devona in particular, appears to appreciate a day in which her attention to detail is celebrated. (Without her careful attention we would not even know when our days of birth are, as it was hardly a focal point during our time at the Corporation).

But needs must be done.

1:11 pm

It appears that each iteration, it is slightly easier to reach the Maze from our own territory. I really must ask the team to investigate if this corresponds to a decrease in the time humans can remain in our territory safely.

I wish it were possible to map the Maze. Upon entry I was in that disgusting room of pigeons, filth, and insects. I should not have worn a dry clean only suit.

I even encountered that timeless Wanderer that can only be referred to in the second person. Ria claims it is directly connected to our gracious Patron, (and if Parker can be believed in his more lucid ramblings, our Jailor) that corporate monster of mazes and money. I fail to see how, but I have faith in her powers of observation.

In any case, I eventually found my way to a room of desks and chalkboards where I now sit. Its melancholy mood matches my own, so I think it comes time to put my thoughts to paper.

I will engage in the conceit that this journal is a separate entity that I am having a conversation with, as this is a common feature of diaries.

3:33pm

Dear Diary,

I have, as of late, had more worries on my mind than ever before. I apologize for not writing more, yet even in this desolate place putting the words outside my own head comes with great difficulty.

I am, to be frank. Dating Neville.

This, of course, goes against my standing policy to avoid attachments. As previous years detailed, my increasing comfort with the team has intermittently been a source of comfort and paranoia.

I do not know why I crave their warmth even as it burns me.

To care is to risk so much.

There is no getting around the fact that they are monsters. If I cared to, I could detail each of their sins in numbers they no doubt have little recollection of.

And yet.

Each attempt I make to separate myself from their messy entanglements leaves me feeling...

Cold.

Alone.

Faded.

Perhaps it is some failing of mine that I no longer feel at my best if I am wholly separated.

But Neville...

It is... unfortunately easy to miss the man's depth. To dismiss him as some form of meat head or, more charitably, someone who cares only about numbers and figures and misses the human element.

Certainly, he has never proven any skill with my line of work.

But I digress. What is essential is that Neville has an uncanny knack to see to the very heart of any truly important matter, even as he misses so many of the fine details.

Recently, I found myself in an argument with him, and, in the wake of it, I felt devastated. How could we make this relationship work if we disagreed? Why didn't he care enough to know how I felt without me having to put things to crude and insufficient words or actions?

Some time after, Neville came to me and asked me, very bluntly, about my other relationships. What made them work, what made them fail. He listened patiently to my halted explanations and...

Suffice it to say he shed light on the matter by scattering my preconceived notions. Relationships take work. It is not a sign of failure when it fails to be effortless. It is not a sign that I am, in some way, unfit for human connection.

I am ashamed to say I lost a bit of control and was quite emotional when I called that a lie. Clearly, I was under the impression, his relationship with Devona is the effortless ease with which all others must be judged inferior.

He got quiet at that.

He said he agreed that he and Devona have a really strong connection. He asked me why I thought that didn't take *work*. Work to not be codependent. Work to understand each other when they were so different. Work to find ways to make their values compatible. He told me they had plenty of arguments, that they even had arguments ABOUT their arguments (he is, quite apparently, a processor, emotionally, while Devona can fall victim to anxiety spirals if disagreements aren't addressed immediately).

And yet, both of them care enough to put the work in to find ways to make things work. Over and over again. A choice made each day out of love.

There is an icicle in my heart when I think of just how much they have between each other. When I think that the non-platonic nature of my relationship with Neville in no way automatically trumps the relationship he has with his Twin. To think that even the desire for that may be a Sin.

And yet.

I have endeavored to learn this skill I have shunned for so long as beneath me. I want to learn what Neville has to teach me about putting in the work and risking everything for the right to *care* as deeply as I am able.

I can only hope that I don't read back on this entry in future years as a sign of madness or irresponsibility. I hope, genuinely and truly, that I look back on this resolution as a sign of growth.

