F A E D I S P A T C H

presents

THE LUNAR SAGA

Personal Journal of Ranger Ookla

Entry 47 — The Night Before

“Tomorrow I leave for Lunar.
I have written that sentence four times in the last hour.
Each time I expect it to become ordinary.”

f a e d i s p a t c h . c o m

Entry 47. The night before departure.

Tomorrow I leave for Lunar.

I have written that sentence four times in the last hour. Each time I expect it to become ordinary. It does not.

The assignment came through official channels, as they all do, and I read the dispatch memo the way I read all memos — standing up, at my field desk, with tea I had already let go cold. But somewhere between the third paragraph and the fourth, I had to sit down. Not because of the distance. Not because of the difficulty rating, or the supply chain constraints, or the notation that communication windows would be limited to forty-eight-hour intervals.

Because of who signed it.

Mother Emme. Her seal. Her signature in the margin — that small, careful script I have spent six years trying to deserve.

I have been a Ranger for six years. In that time I have been posted to two coastal surveys, one mountain reclamation, and the Redvale incident, which I do not discuss in this journal. I have performed adequately. I believe I have performed adequately. The commendations suggest I have performed adequately.

But Lunar is different.

Lunar is where the Bureau sends Rangers who have moved past adequate.

I do not know if I am past adequate. I know that Mother Emme believes I am, or she would not have signed that memo. I have decided to hold that thought like a field instrument I do not yet know how to use — carefully, without gripping too hard.

My bags are packed. Three notebooks, two pencils, one ink pen for formal dispatches. My compass, though I have been told Lunar's magnetic fields make standard compasses unreliable. I packed it anyway. It was Mother Emme's, when she was in the field. She gave it to me the week I graduated from the survey programme. I have not told her I carry it on every posting.

I have not told her a great many things.

I am nervous. This is not a field assessment. This is a private journal and I am permitted to be nervous in private journals. I am nervous

about the unknown topology, about the extended communication blackouts, about the atmospheric irregularities in the lower Pale Flats region. I am nervous about the things that are in the briefing materials that I have read four times and still do not fully understand.

I am mostly nervous about not being enough.

Emme gave me this posting. She looked at my six years of adequate work and saw something I cannot yet see in myself, and she sent me to the most remote, most difficult assignment in the current Bureau rotation. I want to be what she saw. I want to send dispatches that, when she reads them at her desk, make her set down her tea and sit.

I want to be worthy of the compass.

Tomorrow I leave for Lunar.

The sentence still does not feel ordinary. I think I will let it stay that way.

— R.O.

Entry 47. The night before departure.

THE DISPATCHES CONTINUE.

From the night she left, Ranger Ookla reports back to the Bureau — methodical, precise, and increasingly uncertain about what she is actually seeing.

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