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Anastasia Tryphosa the Machinist

Logan T. Collins

Logan.T.Collins.19@dartmouth.edu

Tommy E. Hart

Dartmouth College, Thomas.E.Hart.19@dartmouth.edu

Madeleine R. Waters

Dartmouth, Madeleine.R.Waters.19@dartmouth.edu

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Anastasia Tryphosa the Machinist

Cover Page Footnote

*This work was created during workshop as a writing exercise. The prompt for this exercise: to write a short form piece about a randomly generated character without having the character present in the story.

Anastasia Tryphosa the Machinist

The prompt for this exercise: to write a short form piece about a randomly generated character without having the character present in the story

Logan Thrasher Collins

Robot: "Anastasia Triphosa exists only in the cortex."

Me: "Sorry, what?"

Robot: "Anastasia Triphosa exists only in the cortex."

Me: "What does that mean?"

Anastasia Triphosa's air bubbles reach the exterior of your clockwork castle complex, emanating from some central gravitational point deep inside the inky fluid. You can't identify her coordinates from these bubbles. If you don't find her within three hundred and thirty three seconds, she will die. You cannot consult the robot, if you do she will die. You cannot consult the gods. If you do, she will die.

Robot: "The diameter of the Atlantic ocean is roughly 2 kilometers if wrapped around itself enough times."

Me: "Shut up."

From the manual, you know that Anastasia Triphosa comes from Thailand, that she smokes exactly 3 weird chemicals per day, and that one of her corneas glows in the dark. You also know that she doesn't exist outside the cortex. Whatever that means.

Robot: "I can tell you a hint if you want."

Me: "You're trying to trick me, she would die if you did that."

Back in the 60's Anastasia Triphosa was married to a five hundred year old billionaire named Fredrick McGee. Unfortunately, she vexed him by insulting his other wife, Starla Screengazer. The insult was in sign language. This ultimately resulted in Anastasia Triphosa's untimely imprisonment/entombment. The robot reminds you that your life depends on Anastasia Triphosa's freedom as well.

Tommy Hart

Name of Absentia : Anastasia Triphosa - Machinist - Indirect

Tax Return Records, IRS

Tripegt, Ferax - 2009 -> Present: Taxes Paid. State of Residency: Georgia. Tax Deductions: Child, Married, Some Donations...

Triphosa, Anastasia - 2016 -> Present: Taxes Paid. State of Residency: Wyoming. Tax Deductions: None claimed.

To: Jackson's Payroll Solutions

From: George

Re: New Hire

Hi – first thanks for all the good work you’ve been doing for us. It’s nice to not have to worry about dealing with all the paperwork whenever we have a new person come on.

Speaking of which, we’ve picked up a few new hires to work in the shop as apprentices – I’m not sure if that’s relevant for any tax deductions or anything. Just thought you should know. You’ll find their W-2’s attached – they’ll all be beginning work immediately, so I’d appreciate you getting them on quickly.

Oh, also, strange thing is that one of them doesn’t have a social security card – don’t know if she has a number. I asked her about it and she didn’t have any idea what I was talking about. We’ll see how she fares in the shop.

MEMO: Read at Leisure

To all staff

From Management

A client has brought it to our attention that they found the letters ‘A.T.’ carved into a part which we made for them; the appearance of such letters is against company policy.

Please refrain from signing initials into any of the work, even in a place where it can’t normally be seen. It’s unprofessional people, and could backfire.

Overheard: Have you seen her and the way she machines?

Madeleine Waters

I walk into her workshop and I can still smell the tang of metal shavings that once covered everything in a black snow, a dusting of volcanic ash. I close my eyes so I don’t have to see the jarring cleanliness of reality, and I let myself float away on waves of nostalgia.

I used to call her princess, after her Russian namesake. She hated it. She was going to be her own person, she said. At first she would say it with a laugh, all bright eyes and springtime and possibility. And bouquets would bloom under her hands and our house would come alive with the whirring and screeching of her tools.

The tools are gone now. I know this without looking; she wouldn’t have left them behind for anything.

My next thought is bitter, but I think it anyway; I used to think she felt that way about me.

Later she would talk about being her own person like she was going to war and salting the earth behind her. After a call from her mother. After a refusal from a gallery. After an acceptance from a gallery that only wanted her as an addendum to her mother’s work.

After I would lightly ask, “how’s it going, princess?” when she’d spent all day creating storms in her studio and I was desperate for some sunshine.

I never found out how to say it to her, but she had always been her own person. The question that kills me is whether she had ever been mine.