

Ikarri sighed as he set the datapad he was reviewing on the table, another day of cataloging, archiving, and maintaining the records of the Collegium's most recent discoveries passing by as they had for the last fifteen years. He stood, stretching, feeling the pop and crackle of joints and ligaments as he did so. He slipped the datapad into his coat pocket and looked around the offices, noticing several of his colleagues similarly preparing to depart for the day.

As he gathered his things, his mind wandered to how many times he had done exactly the same movements with the exact same pattern. A bemused smile crossed his face as he mentally started doing the arithmetic, counting the minutes it took for him to pack his things, say his goodbyes, and walk the station to his small quarters.

"You're staring into space again, old man," a familiar voice spoke from behind him. Ikarri turned to look down at the smaller form of the Mirialan woman.

"Hello Zara, you made me lose count," Ikarri stated with a matter-of-fact, almost annoyed tone.

"Counting?"

"Don't worry about it, did you..." Ikarri started to speak before being cut off.

"We just spent hours working, and you want to talk about work? I need a drink, and you're coming with me." Zara was an archaeologist who had taken a liking to him years ago, but Ikarri had avoided any of her initial advances due to the nearly forty-year difference in their years. Once she got over the initial affront, she'd instead found someone she could trust.

Before long, he found himself sitting in a booth, a mug of something at least chilled and pleasantly tasting in front of him as he listened to his friend recounting stories of the past few days since they had spoken. His mind wandered again to the idea of how many minutes he'd spent in the Collegium doing... nothing.

A morose depression ate at the edges of his mind when he realized how little impact he'd had on the universe, with the better part of a decade spent cataloging others' discoveries, others' adventures. Even Zara had been off-station multiple times to work at various sites. He couldn't remember the last time he'd been off Horizon Station.

"You're doing it again; people are going to think I've broken your heart if you keep staring in your cup like that," Zara's voice interrupted his thoughts again, bringing him back to the present where he gave a slight smile before shaking his head.

"I... Just find things are different than I expected."

"You've brought this up so many times. Yet you never do anything about it. You don't volunteer to go off-station. When was the last time you were in a cockpit, Ikarri?" Zara spat suddenly, a frustration in her voice he found surprising.

Ikarri found himself struggling for words as he remembered the opportunities he had been given and turned away from. His guilt grew as he realized he always had an excuse each and every time. Even now, he found his mind quickly searching for an excuse to respond with before he sighed and downed the remainder of his drink.

“Idle thoughts and useless regrets, just forget about it,” he said, lifting the mug to motion for another drink. Meanwhile, his companion’s frustration melded into disappointment and then resignation, knowing that he’d never change, no matter how much more Ikarri could have been.