

Performance

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Performance

by [AnalyticChaoticism](#)

Summary

A retelling of the events that instigated the game as we know it, and the eventual confrontation with Sybil in the Empty Set.

Everyone in the audience fell silent in an instant once the curtain rose, and she made her way toward the microphone, a gentle sway in her hips. Her flowing red hair glimmered in the spotlight as she assumed position behind the microphone. The piano in the corner began to play, and Red began to sing.

...

She Jaunts() behind a wall, the Empty Set blurring around her. Whirring gears and the clicking of metallic joints fill the room as the Process make their advance. Weeds sway gently in the corners of the room, creating a healing field around the damaged Creeps. Almost as if they can sense her, one pivots at the waist joint and locks onto her, sending out a magnetic beam that hits the wall. Sybil's manic, distorted babbling reverberates around the room.

"You can do this" he tells her.

Red clutches the Transistor until her knuckles turn white. Surely Reisz can't keep up the fight much longer.

...

It's as if her voice replaced the oxygen in the room, in everybody's lungs. Nobody could look away. Red, and her serene voice, were captivating. Nothing existed outside of her sound. Camera's flashed, but the reporters didn't even remember pressing the buttons. They were all spellbound. And so they should've been. In every sense of the word, Red was beautiful.

He sat there, backstage, watching from the shadows, the most mesmerized of all. He knew how lucky he was to be a part of her life, and there was nothing he appreciated more. In that moment, everything in the world for everyone who could hear, was perfect.

...

The Creep's energy degrades the wall, and Sybil spots her. She rares up, her dress fanning out, her new lance of a parasoul raised. The two charge at each other, but Red not only has speed, but time on her side. Reality freezes, Sybil's attack paused in midair. Marvelling at the monstrosity her old friend had become, Red begins to cue up Breach() to put her out of her misery.

...

The show, just like every other, was insanely successful. Smash hits were all Red ever performed. Dry eyes were unheard of. Everyone was misty. Except, seemingly, the friends who would greet her backstage as the crowd - coming out of their daze - cried for an encore, reporters for interviews.

Sybil, Asher, Grant, and Royce. The Camerata. Grant was holding a sword which looked more like a comically sized circuit board, but the chill in the room was unmistakable. The Transistor, for its strangely deceptive appearance, is an incredibly powerful object. In their hands? An incredibly powerful weapon. Sybil had tried to convince her to do as they asked, but her mood was soon to sour and her temper fast to flare. What they were doing would benefit everyone. They just needed to use the Transistor to unify the abilities of all the talented citizens - 'citizens like her' - to reform things for the better. Cloudbank the canvas, the Transistor the brush, and Red the paint. The Process, she says, are these cute little robots the Transistor can control, and they have the ability to reshape reality. They just need some special abilities to program them with, if you will. She assured Red that the move wouldn't be permanent, that they were positive there was a way to get out of it once you'd gone in, back to her body. But - and of course with Sybil the but was small, as they always were - if she, and the other talented people they had inside it couldn't get back out, their sacrifices were for the greater good of the city they all loved so much, and they would always be remembered with love by all. Grant was more threatening, warning her of his extensive powers as such a highly regarded Administrator. Asher, always by Grants side, supported his intimidation tactics wholeheartedly. Grant and Asher were always a sweet couple, although Red wasn't much appreciative of their seeming rebranding as the Homicidal Husbands. Royce just stood and watched, as Royce was want to do. Of course he wasn't just watching silently. He was analyzing. Such was his job as the brains behind the organization. Apparently he was the one who found the Transistor, he was the man who came up with the plan.

Red didn't like the plan very much.

Grant was the one who threw the sword in the end. Sybil, to her credit, had tried her best to quell his gradually building intolerant impatience. He wasn't having a bar of it. 'They were so close,' he had said, 'and they weren't going to stop. They hadn't stopped before, and he was not about to start setting negotiable precedents.' And so he threw the sword.

None of them, not even Red, anticipated Him. A boyfriend to jump in the way to save her. The blade passed through his midriff and grazed her arm on its way through.

He lost his life - or at least, his body. She lost her voice.

But the Camerata?

They lost the Transistor.

...

The energy waves of Breach() move fast, and they make short work of their enemies.

Sybil never stood a chance.

The electrical packets of Spark() detonate and confine her in their electrical field. The Cheerleaders, and the Process they shield, all fall to the onslaught. The beams hit Sybil, destroying her.

“I saved you I saved you I saved you I always I always wanted to...” Red can barely make out the words among the electronic sound warping.

She rises into the air and shakes, spawning Cells, which Red collects (she’s drained, and in no mood to fight anything that would respawn from them). In a flash of light, Sybil is on the ground. Smaller now. Without legs. She drags herself along the ground, leaving a Process trail in her wake. As hard as it is to understand what she says now, it’s clear what she’s doing. Sybil is sobbing. Red stands behind her, Transistor in hand, the trace of her boyfriend’s soul inside it.

“What now...” he trails off, knowing he doesn’t need to suggest the conclusion. Red already made it a long time ago.

Crash() ends it.

“Finally finally finally we can be...”

And Sybil dies.

“Her trace.”

It appears above her, a translucent blue cube, representing what’s left of her soul. A new ability to use to purge Cloudbank of the virus destroying it.

“Hello again, Sybil,” he says as you absorb her. “Your Camerata friends. I want you to tell us where they are. D’you understand?”

...

She had no idea where she was, where *he* was, where the others were. How anyone had gotten anywhere. All she knew was that the world was grey and she was terrified. Never a stranger to the night (Red loved to come out here with him and stare into the glimmering water, the gentle currents mirroring the stars in the darkened sky), it was the first time she’d ever felt scared to be alone in the dark. Faintly she could hear him calling out to her, but it didn’t sound quite like him. It was almost as if there were a digital pitch to his voice now. She was probably just hearing things. She shuffled on over to where she heard him, passing the bright glow of the OVC Terminal. It’s petitioning a bridge to connect Cloudbank and Fairview. She signs it, asking anyone who’s reading it for help. She knows that eventually someone will see the message, once it’s passed moderation and the Admins trawl through

every other comment left by every other citizen. By then it will be far too late, but it doesn't hurt to try, does it?

That's when she sees him.

His body is propped against a row of small trees dividing the path, the Transistor lodged in his stomach. It lights up as he talks, talks about being stuck inside of it. Inside the Transistor? Obviously the words aren't coming from his mouth. Nothing will ever come from his mouth ever again, she can see that from here.

That's when he sees her.

He asks her to say something, but she doesn't make a sound. He asks again, but all she can do is exhale. Nothing will ever come from her mouth ever again, he can see that from... wherever he is, inside the Transistor. He knows it devastates her.

...

Silently, she vouches to return his soul to his body.

...

Red tears the bottom off her dress, freeing her legs. It didn't matter of course, Red could look elegant in a torn dress. Red could make practically anything elegant if she tried. Not that elegance is a particular concern when your boyfriend is clinically dead, you need to put your traitorous friends in their place, and save the world from a now out of control robot swarm destroying your idyllic little piece of it.

...

Silently, he vouches to return her voice to her body.

...

She slips her boyfriend's jacket off his body, and onto hers.

...

Together, they vouch to find the Camerata. Together, they vouch to stop them from acting on their plans, dangerous enough to get him killed, alongside the mysteriously disappearing talent of Cloudbank.

Together, they vouch to never leave each other's sides again.

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