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In this world lie two types of people: mice, those who oh-so softly sing to themselves, and rats: those who boldly boast about their best and brightest. I fancy myself one of the mice; I have not the heart nor desire to break down the walls upon which rest my roof. I was perfectly content—content with my reality in all four dimensions of time and space.

Mice are the ones to keep to themselves. We lock ourselves in a great princess tower, lonely and estranged—we like it that way. Sure, we may sometimes let others through our gates, but we remain firm about who comes in and when they leave.

Rats, on the other hand, are wildly outgoing; they are the embodiment of noise: loud, proud, and motivated to get what they want. Rats are possessed with a passion to get more, be it more wealth, power, fame, or respect. Naturally, these people climb the ladder. They become leaders, politicians, CEOs, and kingpins. We mice are everyone else—the unsung heroes of the world—we cook, we clean, we take and follow orders like good cogs in good machines. Without us, the rats would have no bones to climb; without rats, there would be no-one to climb upon our bones.

All of this I deem fair. There cannot be a world in which there are winners without losers; there cannot be rich without poor; there cannot be grace without gore. What I do not deem fair is the mechanisms in which we sort the rats and the mice. Rats are separated from mice soon after birth based on the most arbitrary of differences. They're bigger, bulkier, and more aggressive. They get put in their own, special, rat schools and are given far more opportunities for success than us little mice. They go off to achieve greatness while we are left to fester at their feet.

Now, I have always known this. I have always accepted that I am a mouse, set to be at the bottom. But still, I remiss what could have been—I, Constance Ebonshire, am turning fifty-five years old. I remain, thankfully, in good health (ignoring my arthritis) and will hopefully go on to lead a long life. I am terrified that will be the only adjective in which I can apply to: “long”. Not “prosperous”, or “fulfilling”, or “meaningful”. Just one, long life of nothingness. And then I’ll die. And no-one will remember who, when, where, why—or if—I existed. Now, in most cases, this is fine; in fact, most everyone dies relatively unremembered, save for their children (whom I do not have). They are peaceful and content in their passing; their faces seem restful, their arms stiffly folded atop their chests, their bones speak nothing louder than a whisper. Yes, bones speak. Most cannot hear what they have to say, but I can. They mostly murmur murmurings—shocking, I know, but they so often only whisper sweet nothings to each other: stories, secrets, confessions, jokes, counting as high as they can—I’m sure talking *about* living gets boring after several lifetimes of just that.

Rats, louder, bolder, brighter, their bones scream. For them, it’s Hell for their chance to be over. They won’t succeed at one more thing in their life; all they must do is appreciate how far they’ve come, which they seldom can. They die possessed of what they have not the heart to desire, thus, they, for eternity, simmer in their own skulls, awaiting a solace that will never come.