

Gaze into the Heavenuies

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“Gaze into the heavenlies, dear soul.”

The phantom whisper shocked me from my studies.

My hand nicked my ink bottle, and my parchment crinkled in the wrong places.

Goodness, Theodore, what’s got your usual composure in a twist? Lighting a few candles, I straightened my jacket and closed the curtains to the castle window in front of my desk. My chair creaked in the dead of night, accompanying the scribbling of my quill.

How many years had I studied the stars and yet could not fathom their entirety? *Nineteen, Theodore, nineteen years of calculating the white fireflies of the sky.*

I elegantly penned *Movement Section 6: the Dying Stars*. I double-checked my references, tables and graphs of rotations, that huge encyclopedia of constellations—

“Gaze into the heavenlies.”

I started at the command again, wondering if I was beginning to hear things from lack of sleep. *Nay, you mustn’t stop your calculations just yet*, part of my mind argued weakly, but how sore my neck was! Switching to a fine print, I recounted that stars were burning chemicals in space, with nothing to hold them and no one to touch them. The cool walls of the castle seemed to moan with my eyes that strained in the candlelight.

Perhaps you could set your studies aside early—but just this time. I capped the ink and stacked my books on the edge of my desk. Whipping out the morning’s post, I discovered nothing but a letter from my mother along with a few wedding invitations from friends who had left the cares of study and found love instead.

I skimmed Mum's letter, my eyes catching the last lines. *You will be able to make that deadline the professors set, won't you? I remember just how much you loved the stars when you were younger—nothing could stop you back then.*

Just how much I loved the stars? I found myself staring at the curtains I had drawn. The magic my soul used to feel when I saw the stars had faded; everything was all books and pressure and life decisions now.

“Peer into the heavenlies.”

I jumped as the curtains burst forth of their own accord, revealing the night skies outside.

In a flash, a figure with wings tumbled from the ether.

What—

I bolted out of my study and down the spiraling staircases. Flinging open the doors, I searched the grounds, inhaling fresh air. How different it was than up in my study, no longer mingled with the scent of books and ink.

I traced the unusual trail of scattered feathers, halting when I reached the source.

“Hullo?” It was the best I could manage. “Who might you be?”

The figure turned quite suddenly, yet it wasn't sudden at all—it was more like waves of light rearranging themselves to behold a simple maiden dressed in glorious gray drapes. Her wings, nothing like the glossy fabled ones, were a soft silver, faded and worn, yet capable of carrying a soul far across the sea.

“Gaze into the heavenlies, dear soul,” said she.

“Pardon?” I stepped back, appalled. What happened to that little boy who would have once upon a time adored this majestic creature with all the facets of the galaxy flashing across her face? *I grew into a realistic gentleman who calculates stars and does not chase fantasies.*

“You study the stars, do you not?”

“In a way. . . .” Part of me wondered how she knew this, or rather plainly, what was even going on.

“Then why must you look so startled?”

“The analogs of stars do not mention . . . you.” I felt at a loss for words.

“Ah, but do you remember to truly peer into the skies?”

“Of course.” Liar. “But I don’t always have the time; you see, scholarly work piles up, and I have a deadline—”

“If you cannot truly experience the wonder of what you study, wouldn’t you be studying in vain?”

“I *do* experience,” I snapped. “I’m looking into the sky right now, alright?”

“Dear soul, it is more than merely *looking*.”

“Nay, they are but lifeless orbs. Who are you to tell me otherwise?”

“I am a messenger, an *anghelos*.” How her face beamed like the moon, and the longer I studied it, the less human it appeared. “Do not simply look at the sky; peer into the heavenlies. Search the universe with purpose. There is much beyond the grave of dying stars.”

Anghelos? The old Greek word reminded me of Someone. My eyes flickered up for a moment. I never quite knew why the stars were so ethereal.

“If you simply study but never truly look up, it all comes to nothing.”

“I’ve tried, alright?” It was hard to stem the confession I blamed on scholarly work. “It’s not as breathtaking as it used to be.” *But when was the last time you gazed into the night?* I did not know.

“Theodore, do you not know what your name means? *Gift from God*.”

“How did you—”

“It is not I who knows, but the One who calls each star by name, even the ones you will never fathom. Remember *why* you study the stars, not just *that* you study them. Gaze into the heavenlies.”

Is it beneath you? my conscience breathed.

Hesitantly, and with a mix of humility and hurt pride, I turned to the sky and peered further into the galaxies. How I had missed this sense of awe that stole my breath. There was something beyond the constellations—a multitude of sparkles, a moon resembling a fingernail, and the purple and blue puffs that looked like a breath of life cast across the universe.

It was all here, just how I’d left it; it had been I who’d drifted away. I’d forgotten how magnificent the universe truly was.

“He gazes down on you, Theodore.”

Peer into the heavenlies and listen as I call you by name, came the deep voice of the Creator, booming from above, yet the softest whisper only for my ears to hear.