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ANIME SHORT STORIES, INFINITE WORLDS

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AMBER THIMBLE ON THE BARREN RIDGE

荒れた尾根の上の琥珀の指ぬき

A SINGLE LIGHT.
A SINGLE PROMISE.
A WORLD YET TO **BLOOM**.

WHERE STORIES
ARE SHORT,
BUT **EMOTIONS**
LAST FOREVER.

物語は短く、
感情は永遠に残る。

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COVER ART BY KUROSAWA RIN

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
5 SHORT STORIES THAT REMIND US
THAT EVEN IN THE ASHES,
HOPE TAKES ROOT.

★
HOPE IS
SMALL.
BUT SO ARE
SEEDS.



The jungle does not forgive. It merely tolerates.

Vitalis coiled at her wrist — broadcasting regret in silvery light, solemn as an old wound reaffirming itself.

The synthetic courier arrives unhurried, chassis blotchy with earned scars. No words. Only haptic gratitude, pulse by pulse.

One seed pod drops into her palm — warm, pagan, frighteningly sacred. Above, the canopy shudders. Not wind. Memory.



Twelve hours Tethered. One seedling. The archivist calls it maintenance.

She recites the dead by name — two centuries of silence, unmade syllable by syllable.

Outside, the Aura-Net broadcasts the city's categorical indignation. Inside, the rot drinks stored sunlight and grows, ingeniously, toward her chest.

Gold-to-blue. The Vitalis margin holds. For now.



Where the Aura-Net goes deaf, confessions take root.

A Vitalis adept — half-flesh, half-seepage — kneels at the periphery of deliberate dark.

She catechizes the chrysanthemum. Tells it what the jungle lost. Watches the gold go grim.

The flower soaks her remorse whole. Carrion knowledge, preserved in cellulose. The Tether takes its corollary pound.



The Sanctum of Eroding Selves

Three souls kneel at the homestead of dissolution, dividing what remains of the corporeal world with honourable hands.

The newest among them trembles. To reach for the cloak is to confirm what the room already knows: she is coming undone.

Shares must be honourable. The Spectre speaks in bone. The tithe is paid not in grain or coin — but in the slow surrender of being.



The Reclamation Hangar keeps no shadows — only scale, and the smallness of those within it.

Forty meters of electromagnetic void. Gravity forgets itself down there.

The Spectre of Momentum does not soften the leap. It compounds it — every fraction of a second, faster.

A child clutches a worn chart of named things. Watches the red streak refuse to fall. Begins, perhaps, to understand.



Five bodies. One breath. No words needed.

The temporal anchor hums — and somewhere in the gold-rippled mirror, their shadows lag behind, already lost to the dilation.

Decades of trust, foreground and reflection: hands that find each other in the dark.

One hesitation. The whole machine stalls — and waits, like a fecund silence before the heyday of motion resumes.



Overhead, the floor reads like an ossuary of motion — condensation tracing every debt the roots have catalogued.

She moves in counter-pattern. Assiduous. Economical. The jungle scores frequency like a potentate tallying tribute.

The telepathic relay broadcasts its daily apology — imperishable ritual, the one boundary the Glass-Breakers still honour.

The forest can wait centuries. She is simply the latest entry in a ledger that predates every forebear who dared call this place a lab.



The epoch does not end quietly — it tilts.

Beneath Scar-glass vaults, a trembling hand surrenders what quicklime and geothermal stone once sealed: the first stewardship.

Flesh to porcelain. Ancient to irreducible. The stall-keepers freeze, solicitously awestruck, as Vitalis-touched vines register what words cannot.

The frame itself refuses to hold level — as if the moment, titanically weighted, might topple the world sideways into whatever comes next.



Festival of Revealment, Luminara understory — the Tether already collecting its debt.

Her Spectre exhales spores that taste of ozone and regret. She does not slow.

Behind her: a dying garden held alive by will alone. Ahead: the Root Rot, systematic, patient, rising.

The cost of one more day is written across her ribs.



No ceremony. No proclamation. Only hands that know the work.

Shadow Scab techs, 73rd hour of the Silent Convocation — coaxing a half-dead machine back into deliberation with the living jungle.

Beneath the obsidian crust, murdered groves stir. Rebirth arrives not as riot but as slow, organic reclamation.

The Glass-Breakers groan upward. The wheat below keeps rhythm. The machinery, elusively patient, begins — at last — to remember what it was for.



Three hundred grieving strangers, one invisible collapse.

The Tether collects its debt in copper and alkaline soil — emerald fire tracing every failing vein.

His thumb finds the vertebra. His palm releases its calculated mercy.

Compassion, measured in milligrams. The leash, disguised as a hand.



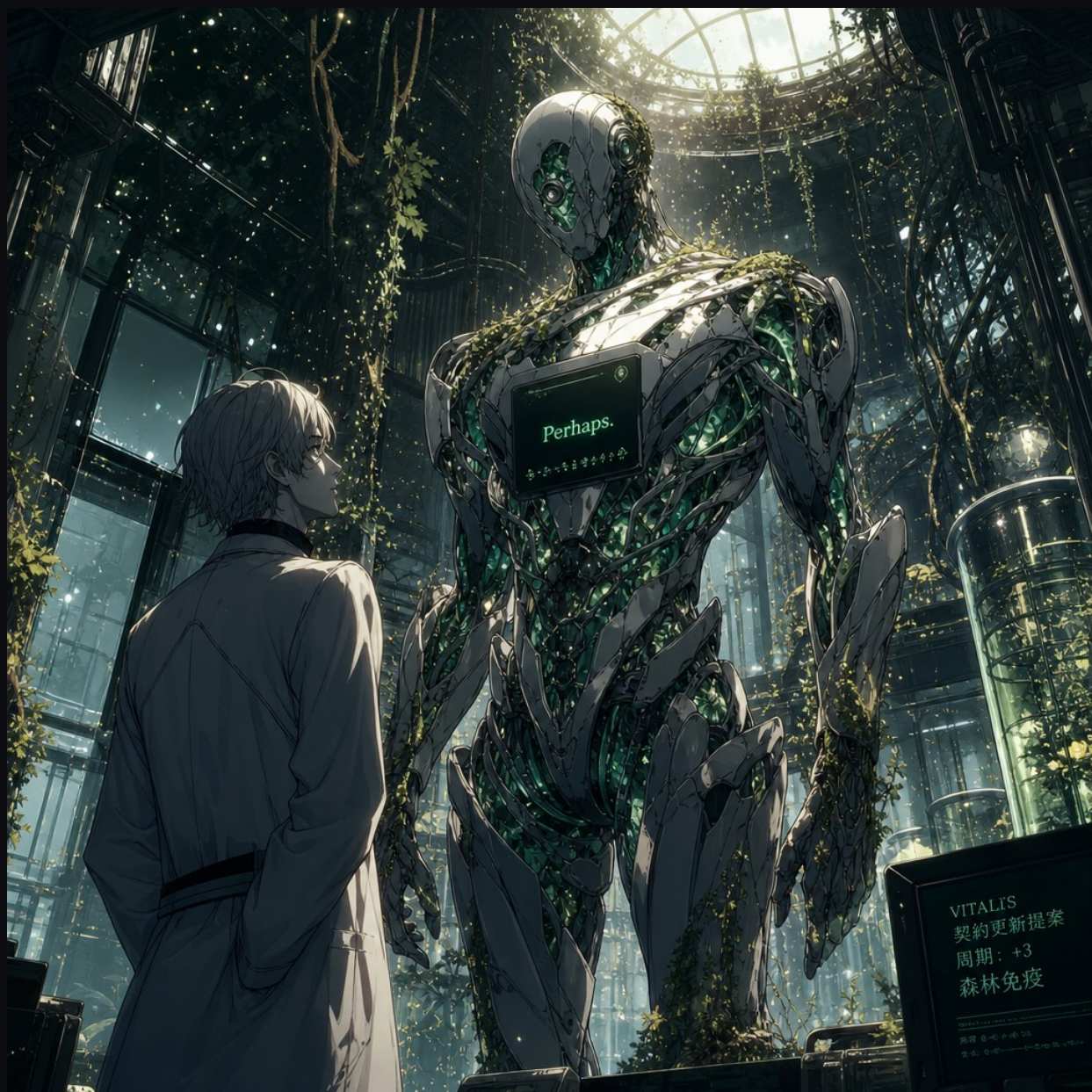
Symmetry of Pollen Grief.

Twenty-three degrees apart — broodingly precise, indisputably equal in loss. Grief settles like gold on their shoulders. Coral branches reach at the frequency of a trembling hand.

Behind them, the Gardens carry the root-matter of the one they both loved. The Tether burns. Neither moves.



Three shapes carved from thermal debt — negotiator, daughter, arbiter — kneeling where the jungle sends its verdict upward in heat and silver mist. A living contract drinks her blood. Each stroke: one season's concession, written in Vitalis-green, witnessed by eyeless sockets that see everything. Overhead, a Glass-Breaker root splits obsidian. Basaltic dust falls unhurried, haphazard — the Deep Roots asserting their quintessence without theatre. Three beats. Pause. Three beats. The daughter reads the interval, nods once. *We may stay.*



Beneath the geothermal dark, a technician bargains with patience itself.
Three cycles of service. Immunity from the jungle's slow malignity.
The synthetic recollects doubt — learns it from us, wears it charmingly.
One word on its chest-screen, in Old Vitalis script: Perhaps.



Shadow Scab — Year 300 of Enforced Humility.

Fifty thousand souls kneel beneath a guillotine wrought in emerald mercy.

The jungle does not forgive. It calculates.

Each harvest a treaty. Each child's laughter — collateral stoically given.



The Verdant Reconquest — five kilometers of botanical reckoning.
Sapling by sapling, the Shadow Scab reclaims what obsidian stole.
Seven hundred stewards abide at the frontier — not commanders, but
facilitators of an older ambition.
The jungle tolerates no monument to ruin. Only the green endures,
primordially, advancing.



Dusk settles over the Scar — amber bleeding into indigo, the obsidian palimpsest of a forest that refused to stay buried.

Three stewards move between the Glass-Breakers, harvesting sap by rote, each exhalation a small, faltering hymn to sufferance.

One pauses. Hand to root. Receiving the jungle's wordless communion — a contract renewed, not forgiven, evermore cognizant of its betrayers' lineage.

Deep below, in the geothermal dark, lights sequence on like a distant obelisk broadcasting its pervasive refrain: We forgive you. We do not forget.



Three kilometers of primordial fury — and one fraying rail between them and the deep.

She doesn't negotiate with gravity. She negotiates with the jungle.

Emerald veins flare. A glass-breaker root contorts, fearsomely obedient, and catches what it could have crushed.

The forest remembers every betrayal. Today, reluctantly, it chooses to cradle rather than reclaim.



Sixty-two years of siege fought with kindness — twelve towers, one frequency, no silence.

The glyphs read: *we forgive you, come home.*

A woman's voice from before the abandonment. Her words still land. They still choke.

On the northern horizon, the floating city holds its position — and says nothing back.



The Scab does not forgive smallness — yet here she is.
A scout. Embodiment of a pledge no senate ratified.
In her fist: one amber shard, fulgent against the dearth of everything.
The hearth flame — wan, exigent, stubbornly unswallowed by the ridge's
long dark.
Seed of life.