

A Broken Shell

Looking back on my life, I have no idea how I got to where I am. Born into an Amarr family, Amarr blood through and through with a legacy that dates back for centuries. Every generation of my family has served in the Imperial Guard. Oddly, I never followed in those foot steps - I always was the odd duck.

Hoarded up in the apartment as a kid, I would peer out the window at the local spaceport for hours just watching the haulers fulfill their contracts. It was impressive to watch how fast they could unload. They would rumble my room like a tin can at night. I would lie in my bed imagining of the worlds they've visited.

We never traveled much as a family but when we did, we were landlocked to the continent. A left over fear from my father's days in the military. He was always vague about his fear of flying. Due to this, we would take land vehicles if we ever traveled anywhere. I didn't mind. Honestly, any environment that wasn't the apartment was a joy to me.

Throughout my childhood my father would routinely take me to the local spaceport to craftspot. It didn't matter what faction made the craft, he'd identify any of them without needing the NeoCom. As a child, it was quite impressive. Looking back, I'm guessing it was some leftover 'ID friend or foe' training from his military days.

My parents tried to sign me up for social activities but even with it I was still a very shy child. Eyes on the floor, never looked up, silent as a mouse. Not until a day when a friend introduced me to someone, It forced me to look up and I've never forgotten that look, that stare. It was the greatest moment of my life. Her name was Neutra, and I'll never be able to forget that face.

Neutra and I were in the same class-year as each other but we rarely had any classes together. She was smarter and wiser than I'd ever be but whenever we did have a class together, I could never stop staring at her. Sometimes it was a quick peek other times it was an excessive stare. I could never get enough of her.

At the academy, I'd always try to be there for Neutra. I wasn't physically impressive or mentally suave but I wanted to prove to her that emotionally, I'd always be her friend. I'd offer her a lift home if she needed one, or just be there if she needed me. Just to prove if anything, I'd always be there for her.

Personally, I barely managed to graduate. Neutra graduated with honors and you could see she was well on her way to greater things. We had a falling-out between us on our last year at the academy. I don't know if she wanted me to ask something of her, or if she was just tired of having me around. But, whatever it was, our friendship was strained.

On our last day at the academy, I asked if I could get a hug good-bye. She declined but I somehow convinced her to let me to look into her eyes one last time. They were perfection. I tried to memorized them as best I could. I knew, this was probably the last time I'd ever get to see her. On my way out, Neutra stopped me and asked if I was going to a friend's graduation party. I wasn't told about it. I asked her if it would be weird if I showed up. She wasn't sure. So, I wished her well and told her to have fun. That's the last time I ever got to see her.

After the academy, I really didn't have a direction in my life. Just taking odd jobs here and there to get through the next day. My free lifestyle seemed to end after the death of my father. Everything seemed to crumble around me. My mother took it the worst. She would leave billing statements, paystubs, and back-taxes fines just lying around the apartment. Maybe it was emotional distress, but part of me thinks it was just a passive aggressive way to ask for help without requesting it. And at this point, I made the dumbest decision of my life.

My grandfather set aside a trust for me to use for college. Everything was paid for I just had to attend. I didn't use it because of how poorly I did at the academy. I didn't want to fail-out, and in my mind, it just seemed better to just not attend. With the trust not being used I decided to cash it out and help my mother. In doing so, I forgoed any opportunities of attending any university, flight school or anything that could be considered higher education. I was essentially screwed from holding a professional career or any possible avenues for a successful future.

There was more than enough to cover her expenses but for some odd reason the billing statements seem to multiply. The backtaxes were paid off but she decided to take a month-long vacation around the galaxy. I didn't even know she liked to fly. After her vacation, she told me to stop being lazy and a career. It was possibly the greatest stab in the back I've ever felt in my life. She knew I gave away any opportunities of a career when I signed away the trust.

With the help of a friend, I forged a few documents, used an old nickname "igRaVeN" and got into the Royal Amarr Institute; capsuleer school. Oddly, I did quite well. I really wanted off this rock. It wasn't home anymore. Anything I could have been was out of reach and the only dream I had left was to venture the stars like I dreamt so long ago.

After graduating, I worked for a few industrial corps. They usually have the most relaxed recruitment standards and most of them forget to do any form of background check. It was a win-win for me. They usually just ask if you can fly a mining ship and they hand you one the moment you say yes. Plus, I really enjoyed it. I must have Caldari blood in my veins because production and procurement for a means of capital just seemed to make sense in my head.

Sadly, almost every other capsuleer in eve has thought the same thing. Its not that I hated that the markets were such high volume. Just there was such a low-index of ever making a profit. Due to this, almost every corp I joined had the grand idea to goto null sec. Most went there to die, yet a few of them built empires but with most things in life, they faded with time. I built empires with my hands and destroyed them with my fist. The only thing that kept me going was that image of Neutra in my head.

I'd always keep a few holoreels of her in my cargo hold. If I ever felt sad or lonely, I could look at a holo of her and enlighten my day. Throughout the years I would check-up on her on evegate and see where she was in the world. She had finished her undergrad in Amarr and moved to Sarum Prime to finalized her doctorate in astrobiology. I knew she would do well.

On evegate, I'm not sure if I forgot to set my status as invisible or if it was reset but I think she saw I was going through her posts. She seemed to be traveling around alot, visiting

almost every system in the galaxy. I 'liked' a few of her pictures and she messaged me. I was completely stunned and oddly paranoid. Life of a miner is quite tedious. There are always locator agents out there trying to find out where you are.

[Start of chatlog]

* Chatlog with Neutra

* Neutra: "Hi"

* igRaVeN: "Uh... Hi?"

* igRaVeN: "Whoever you are... you found my mercoxit"

* Neutra: "What?"

* igRaVeN: "Nothing... is it really you?"

* Neutra: "It's Neutra"

* igRaVeN: "What was the last thing I ask you before we left the academy?"

* Neutra: "What?"

* igRaVeN: "Meh... whatever... I doubt you would remember... You've had a busy life."

* igRaVeN: "Did it show you that I was liking at your pictures?"

* Neutra: "No"

* Neutra: "What pictures?"

* igRaVeN: "Hmm... Maybe they were friend's of friend... but you were on a dairy farm on Sarum Prime and you looked beautiful."

* igRaVeN: "You looked happy."

* igRaVeN: "Actually... Looking through a few of your photos, it looks like you're traveling around a lot... Did you get famous and not tell me?"

* Neutra: "Haha"

* Neutra: "Just having fun before start my career"

* igRaVeN: "Ahh nice... Any recent vacations?"

* Neutra: "Just got back from riding dunebuggies on Aldrat VIII"

* igRaVeN: "Eww... What were you doing out in Minmatar space?"

* igRaVeN: "So... Is your father happy that you finally became the doctor he always wanted you to marry?"

* Neutra: "Hahaha"

* Neutra: "When was the last time we spoke?"

* igRaVeN: "Uhh... I think back in YC106 after graduation someone setup a chatroom and I wrote 'NEUTRAS HOT!!!'"

* igRaVeN: "Never logged back in....cause I'm a giant man-child... but yeah... I think that's the last time we spoke"

* igRaVeN: "God... we're old"

* Neutra: "Why didn't you contact me in college?"

* igRaVeN: "I didn't think I was worth your time..."

* igRaVeN: "...and I didn't want to be creepy"

* igRaVeN: "Wait... Did I stand a chance?"

* Neutra: "No"

* igRaVeN: "Oh okay... That would've destroyed me if I knew..."

* Neutra: "Why?"

* igRaVeN: "You know I've always been crazy about you... I would go out of my way to make sure you always had a ride home."

* igRaVeN: "Ever since you gave me that look when we first met... I've never stopped thinking about you."

* igRaVeN: "Seriously... Everytime I look at another woman... I base them off a scale of you. And there's never been anyone as perfect."

* Neutra: "O_O"

* Neutra: "Why are you telling me this?"

* igRaVeN: "idk... Boredom..."

* igRaVeN: "Can I ask you something lewd?"

* Neutra: "Sure?"

* igRaVeN: "I found some holos online that look almost like you..."

* igRaVeN: "Some of her features aren't exactly like yours... but at a glance, I could swear it was you..."

* Neutra: "Can you eveMail them to me?"

* igRaVeN: "Uhh... I have no idea what station I left them in"

* igRaVeN: "It's not like the holoreels I have of you in my personal hanger..."

* igRaVeN: "wait..."

* Neutra: "What?"

* Neutra: "DELETE THEM!"

* igRaVeN: "Oh come on... please... They're just innocent holos"

* igRaVeN: "I don't do anything with them... I just... You're my light when I'm at my darkest."

* igRaVeN: "To be completely honest... You're the last thing I think of before I get podded..."

* Neutra: "Delete everything!"

* igRaVeN: "fine... it's going to be a little difficult to find them all but I'll make sure they're all gone."

* igRaVeN: "I know i've never been worth your time but... I never stop thinking about you... You're always on my mind."

(Other user is typing...)

(Other user has left.)

[Connection Closed]

[End of chatlog]

I didn't know it, but I lost a friend that day. I'd like to think if someone found lewd pictures of me, they would tell me. Maybe saying nothing was the better option. I don't know. I'm sure there was a better way but I couldn't think of it at the time. I have no idea why I told her I had holos of her. I think I wanted to be caught.

I grew tired of mining. Endless hours staring at station undock waiting for hostiles to leave system. I had enough. I started injecting gunnery skills like a madman. I was going to start fighting these bastards and show them not all miners are easy prey. While I'm not most proficient pilot. If I'm in fleet, I'm almost always the pilot with the most wrecking shots.

My industry corp finally decided to join an alliance, and my god, it was the best decision ever made. I was finally able to join fleet battles that only my childhood-self could've imagined. 100+ battleships all fighting over some unmarked piece of space. Oh man, it was glorious.

I've fought wars in the north, the south, the east and the west. Every war seemed to blend together after awhile. The only unique aspects were the commanders. Some would just bring excess numbers to win the day but with other, It seemed like nothing could stop us.

But with the constant wars, everything starts to lose meaning. I've watched alliance members become hostiles and hostiles become friends. It started to bring back my paranoia from my days as a miner. I was always on edge trying to figure out who would try to backstab me. You become bitter of the glorious battles and you start to see the hollow shell that holds the alliance together.

I missed home. Even though Amarr had broken me once before I still missed seeing the golden spires and the crowded streets. I missed normality. I missed safety. Years had passed and I returned to see my mother. There were still piles of bills but it looked like she was working to pay them off. She started spouting stories that just didn't add up and then just full-blown lies about my past.

She started asking me about a rumor she made-up in her head. She believed that I had become a booster dealer and spread this rumor as the reason I left Amarr. I asked if she even remembered the trust I cashed out. She did. She also admitted that she told the capsuleer school about my forged documents and that she notified the authorities that I was visiting that day.

I have no idea why my mother loves to smite me. Is it because I looked like my father? Or was it because I didn't follow in his footsteps and join the Imperial Guard? I have no idea. But, she ratted me out for falsifying my ID and committing perjury. I'm now an outlaw, a criminal to my own empire. All because I wanted to was improve myself and there's no way I was going to jail for that.

I hurried to the local spaceport that I used to immortalized all those years ago. I paid off a hauler pilot to transport me to low-sec. With how fast they load those ship, no one ever gets a chance to look inside. As soon as we made it, I destroyed every neoCom, eveGate account, anything that was connected to my old self. The only thing I kept was a re-fragmented holo of Neutra. It wasn't the best quality. Lines were missing but it was still enough to remember her.

Low security space was even more tedious than my days as a miner. I ventured through a few space anomalies, killed the outlaws that were in my way but it wasn't as glorious as my days in null-sec. It was a continued low-point in my capsuleer life.

I spent years down there but I grew tired of the relentlessness of low-sec. It drove me insane. There was nothing to do, no one to contact, just endless time with myself. I finally drummed up the courage to buy a neoCom to looked up Neutra. Her posts seemed to stop after YC118. I don't know why she was on Hek V. If it was for work or for pleasure but there was a protest and some fringe tribe decided it would be hilarious if they attacked. Neutra's life was taken that day. Due to her religion, she didn't believe in cloning. I'll never get a chance to see her again or say the words I always wanted to say.

They stole my light, my guiding light. Every fiber in my body is telling me to take vengeance on every Minmatar I see. But I don't want to spread the same blind-hate they forced on me. I would hate if I stole someone else's light. I owe Neutra that much to find her perpetrator. So until that day, I leave this beacon and I'll return to the stars to maybe someday find that spark that let me see the world as I once did.

[BEACON :: START]

I really haven't had much luck with love.

... But there has always been a woman in my heart that I could just never let go.

Ever since that bus ride when a friend introduced me to her.

It forced me to lookup... and I've never forgotten that look, that moment, that stare.

Its been in my head ever since...

Kind of like a beautiful song.

You listen to it.

You hum to it.

You just close your eyes and there it is...

An angel. The harmony to your heart's beat.

Everything was in balance when I was around her.

But time moved on... We moved on, we went our separate ways...

But man... If I could go back and live those days again, I would. And I wouldn't change a thing...

I cherish every moment I got to see her, I cherished driving around with her, I just loved being with her.

She was my Serenity.

She was my music.

When she would speak - it sounded like a chorus to my ears.

It would literally set my emotions; my pace in life.

It was this rush of pleasure, happiness that... nothing else in the world could provide.

But she was just like music. She could slow it down and control the rhythm.
I'd have to hum along and wait for the chorus to return.
I wouldn't rush it. I knew if I just waited, she'd return.

And that's sorta how music works...

Each refrain of the chorus,
The music builds...
Our voices grow,
our message gets just a little bit more sincere...
Everything's great - Its our harmony
I can just go where the music takes me.

But... When it's my chance to set the tempo, I'd freeze.
She had that rhythm.

She'd build the music.
Refrain the chorus.
Before I knew it.
Before I could stop it.

It all came to a crescendo.
Its the loudest thing I've ever heard.
It was this incredible feeling of clarity, it rang and it roared...
And its... gone...

Time moved on... She moved on. She didn't want to be my chorus anymore...
I had forgotten her, I'd forgot to be her harmony, forgotten what she meant to me.
I know she told me to delete her holos but I just love looking at her face.
I just wanted that moment, that stare... that happiness that I doubt I'll ever feel again in my life.

I had so many chances, opportunities, luck and its nothing now.

I'm nothing to a lot of people but what hurts most is that I was nothing to her - Not even worth her time.

I still miss her though.

If anyone is reading this, I just need you to promise me... Promise me that you'll always find the harmony in your heart. Even if you lose a beat and you can only hear the melody, just keep humming along, find that rhythm and I guarantee you - you'll find that harmony again. Promise me that!

This is to forever love.

[END OF BEACON]

There's nothing more in the world I need than Neutra here - here with me. But that life was never meant to be.