

# The Wall Within Him

Short story by Isabella Furu (in MYP4 at Blindern vgs)

The process happened gradually. With each hour, he remembered. Short glimpses became a flood of memories of increasing clarity and significance. They were all so perfectly intact, so vividly clear, that remembering became something like watching a television show, a reel of images in which he had played a leading role.

He sat outside on his terrace and leaned against the concrete wall of his building, warmed by the sun. Exhaust bellowed from the pipes of factories on the horizon, beyond which all that was visible was the giant wall that encompassed the town.

He thought back to the first day he found himself inside that wall's borders. He had awoken to a sensation that thrummed through his veins like liquid fire. Not pain, exactly. More of a shame, and regret that burned just as strongly as any physical torture. And above all, he remembered the wall that had formed inside his mind, the one that blocked all recollection of his prior life, igniting a sorrow whose presence felt like a locked door, a dream one could sense but never reach, a hole he had no idea how had gotten there, or if it would ever go away.

He traced a circle inside his mouth with his tongue, relishing in the lingering flavour of the elixir he had been offered a few hours before. The one the vendor had promised would regift him his past. In his mind, he replayed the scene. How he had been drawn to the shadows somehow, the edge of the city square where she had resided. How she had intrigued him with the promise of remembering his past, yet warned him of the consequences. He had not cared. Any sacrifice was worth it, for he couldn't bear the thought of living another day, another moment, without remembering, without knowing.

He continued to replay each memory he acquired as he stared at the wall on the horizon. It was nearly a kilometer tall and mostly concrete like the rest of the town, but spiked at the top with barbed wire. Why was the wall there again? It had never occurred to him to question its presence. He had been told that it protected them. Kept the wild animals out. But what kind of animal would need a wall of that height and hazard to be discouraged from passing?

His breath caught as the chill of realization struck him, and he finally understood the vendor's warning.

The wall was not meant to keep things out. It was there to keep things, to keep people, in. *Prison*, whispered a voice in his mind, as the final surge of memories returned.

He understood now. They were watching him. Molding him. Him, who had been an unforgiveable scrap of a citizen, into something more formidable.

The wall in his mind had crumbled, memories returned. He was now fully aware, fully cognizant, but living with painful truths. Imprisoned in the reality he had unknowingly uncovered.

*Was ignorance bliss?*