

The Woman sat in her audio recording booth staring at the screen in front of her. Waiting. Waiting and thinking. She thinks a lot in the moments where the screen is off. When she had nothing to say and nothing to do but sit and wait and think. She thought a lot about what the outside world was like. Her favourite thing to do was imagine what she had done before this. Maybe she had a small cottage tucked away in the woods far away from the rest of the world. Maybe she had a husband - or wife. In truth, she did not mind if it was either or for the Woman found herself unbothered by the concept of gender. She only knew that she herself was in fact, a woman. This line of thought then brought the question, would her spouse have a name. It was hard to imagine calling them 'Husband' or 'Wife' but then again, what were names? The dictionary said that a name is 'A word or set of words by which a person or thing is known, addressed, or referred to.' So what was to stop their names from being 'Husband' or 'Wife' or even 'Spouse'.

She frowned. There was no dictionary here and try as she might, she could not recall ever reading one yet somehow, she knew what it was. She could recite it all from memory in many languages. In all languages, actually. Something she found herself feeling irrationally proud of. After all words are simply letters (Which in of themselves are simply symbols with an arbitrary meaning ascribed to them.) strung together and then agreed upon to have some form of meaning and languages are made up of many words. The grammar, the syntax, and the way in which she is speaking might change, but languages all have one universal thing in common. They are used to communicate. Wants. Feelings. Desires. Needs. Emotions. They communicate all those things and more. Things that the Woman found herself having, but yet no one to tell. No one to listen to her words. No one to listen to *her*. What was the point of knowing all the languages in all existence when there was no one to hear her. No one but the ones she made in her mind. Their features and names and places all hung just out of reach. Faded, like a distant memory. Something ached - her heart ached - whenever she thought of them. Of those memories. Of the soft caresses she shared with an unknown lover. Of the quiet moments spent alone, watching the stars.

Her audio recording booth was all she knew. All she had ever known. Yet the fact she dreamed of an outside world gave her some comfort. That there might be something more than this. This thing she could call existence. Something more than reading aloud in a monotone voice the numbers and words that flashed on the screen. At least, that is what she hoped. The Woman hoped a lot, too. She hoped that one day her voice would be her own. That when the screen flickered to life and the words started to scroll, the voice that left her would be her own. That she would have some semblance of control. She hoped that she could

leave the booth. Step outside and feel the warmth of the sun again. See the twinkling lights that flecked the night's sky like freckles dusted across a person's face. Freckles that she'd trace with a gentle touch, creating patterns and constellations of her own design.

The Woman allowed herself a melancholy smile as the light of the screen lit up her pale features. Her thoughts and hopes and dreams drifted away like dust on the wind, her mind turning blank. Words held no meaning to The Woman anymore as she spoke. "*Attention, Citizens...*"