

The Library of Eternity
Allegorical One-Act Play

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INT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - EVENING

People are sitting around the library "reading, studying, and packing up for the night. The ornate space glistens in contrast to the winter storm outside.

SELENE (23) a new-hire enters, carrying books and putting them back. It takes her a while as it is only her first week on the job.

She then makes her way to the door as the last person leave to lock the doors.

Above the stage sits a Victorian analog clock with roman numerals and reads 10 pm. One the last person leaves, the clock slowly begins ticking as the play progresses.

SELENE

Ahh. First closing shift.

(beat.)

Now where did Dawn say the supply closet was?

She wanders around and finds the supply closet (offstage). She comes back on stage with a brooms and begins sweeping.

She makes her way around the stage, cleaning under the desks and through the aisles of books. She then comes across a table in the corner of the room covered in intricate books, orbs, pens, and a globe in the corner.

Selene sweeps around a leg of the table and suddenly TRIPS over the rug the table is on. She stumbles, and tries to grab onto the clock on the desk for stability.

EXT. ETERNITY - EVENING

click! Selene accidentally twists the clock and something unlocks. Upstage, we see two bookcases part, and pair of glowing doors with the sign "Eternity" written in fantastical font, shines above.

Out of the corner of her eye, Selene senses the glow coming from this new, enchanting doorway.

SELENE
(shocked)

What the...

She looks around and makes sure that no one else is seeing this too, but remembers it is closing shift.

She makes her way over to the doors, looming feet above her, and warily opens them.

INT. ETERNITY - EVENING

Once in, the doors shut behind Selene with a big THUD.

Now, the clock that was once ticking above the stage - stops.

This library somehow seems to be taller than the one Selene was just in. Somehow defying the laws of physics, there are endless amounts of books lining the shelves - further than the eye can see. A rolling ladder leans against the bookshelf.

SELENE
What is this place?

She looks all around. She finds a row of books, all with names on their spines.

SELENE
(muttering to herself.)
Anna, Christian, Stella, Emma,
Morgan, Evan, David...

Trying to figure out a pattern, she paces the room.

SELENE
Well they're obviously not
alphabetical, and they're not by
gender.
(beat.)
Last name?

She picks up a book and looks at the cover. No last name.

She opens it, hoping for some better luck. Inside is a "Table of Contents" with a first and last name and the top and years listed below.

SELENE

Bingo!

She grabs the book next to it to compare but the names don't match. But the starting years do – both 1945.

SELENE

Interesting...

She runs her fingers down the pages and sees that the dates stop at different years.

THE TIME KEEPER (OFF STAGE)

I see you found the diaries...

Selene looks around, but cannot tell where the voice is coming from.

SELENE

Who said that?

THE TIME KEEPER (OFFSTAGE)

I did.

SELENE

Who are you?

Suddenly, a glow appears from the middle of the room. An open book, much larger than Selene, sits promptly in the middle of this library – beckoning towards her.

THE TIME KEEPER (OFFSTAGE)

I am the Time Keeper, and this...
is Eternity.

Selene looks all around her, taking it all in again.

She backs up and suddenly bumps into someone.

SELENE

AHHH! Who are you?!

Selene turns around to see THE TIME KEEPER (early 30s) standing in front of her. She is stately, and dressed in what looks to be golden robes, though covered in dust from the library.

She doesn't seem like one to truly cares about appearances too much as she hasn't dusted it off since she has met Selene.

THE TIME KEEPER
The Time Keeper.

Selene points to the book.

SELENE
(in disbelief)
But I thought...

THE TIME KEEPER
(laughs)
Oh! You thought... haha! My dear,
you are not the first one that has
happened to. I am always back here
organizing these books, it's hard
to keep track someday.

Selene notices she is still holding the books from earlier.

SELENE
Oh I'm sorry, I probably messed up
your system.
(beat.)
Here.

She hands the books to The Time Keeper.

SELENE
What are these about anyway?

THE TIME KEEPER
All of these books are a
documentation of everyone's lives
since the beginning of time. Every
moment, every word said, even
thoughts left unspoken.

SELENE
Wow. So how does it work?

THE TIME KEEPER
What do you mean, dear?

SELENE

Well like, how does it work when someone ages... and when someone dies?

THE TIME KEEPER

Well, when someone gains another year, they get another chapter in their book of life. And when they die...

SELENE

When they die...

THE TIME KEEPER

Their book ends.

Selene is disheartened but expected this truth.

SELENE

Oh.

THE TIME KEEPER

Yes. It is the sad reality that I have had to keep for centuries and eras now. But on the bright side, I have gotten to witness the most amazing moments all from my cozy little nook.

The Time Keeper motions to a nook in the library, with a small side table, jade colored wingback chair, and a tea station off to the left.

SELENE

How do you read these books? They looked so cryptic when I opened them...

THE TIME KEEPER

Well, let me show you. Let's find your book shall we?

(beat.)

Reach out your hand and it will come to you.

Selene does as she is told. A book with SELENE glowing down the spine begins to float down towards her and it slowly descends until it fits right into her grasp.

The Time Keeper stands beside a podium, inlaid with gold leafing, in front of the large glowing book.

THE TIME KEEPER

Now, place your book here and open
a date from your memory.

SELENE

But... how will I know where to
turn?

THE TIME KEEPER

(assuring)

You'll know.

Selene closes her eyes and turns to a page in the book. As she does, the glowing book begins to turn with her, and reveals her memory.

Selene is overcome with emotion at this magic.

SELENE

(softly)

Oh my goodness.

The memory, presented in a gold dust hologram is of her sitting in her elementary school library while her mom reads to a group during class period.

THE TIME KEEPER

What is this memory?

SELENE

Oh... uhh...

She is distracted by the beauty of her deceased mother.

SELENE

It's my mom who uh...

(beat.)

She died earlier this year.

But, she used volunteer at my school's library and would read to us sometimes.

(beat.)

It's how I got into wanting to work at the library.

THE TIME KEEPER

Ahh I see.

SELENE

(to herself)

389.2

THE TIME KEEPER

What was that?

SELENE

Oh. Um, it's something my mom and I used to say. 389.2 -- It's the Dewey decimals for fiction. When she would volunteer, she knew she could always find me there. I'd spend hours in those books, so much so that we'd end up checking out books to read together.

(beat.)

So, whenever I feel like I need her here with me, I always say 389.2

The Time Keeper is touched.

THE TIME KEEPER

That is... sweet.

SELENE

What about you?

THE TIME KEEPER

What about me?

SELENE

Well, I shared a memory now you should share one of yours.

The Time Keeper is hesitant.

THE TIME KEEPER

Oh now... I don't think I want to do that.

SELENE

Why not?

THE TIME KEEPER

Well, it's not like I don't want to share - it's that I can't.

Selene is confused.

THE TIME KEEPER

Time stands still here in Eternity. And when I became the Time Keeper, god it seems to be eons ago, time stopped... and so did my memories.

Selene sits with this new information.

SELENE

Oh, I didn't know.

THE TIME KEEPER

Of course you didn't, no one really does. But it's okay. I've had the beauty of living with all the memories that have been made across time. Those are my memories now.

The Time Keeper pats the podium.

THE TIME KEEPER

Here. Why don't you find another memory while we're at it?

Selene shrugs and walks over to the podium. She flips to the end of the book, which shows her just moments before entering Eternity. But right when the door unlocked, the memory stops.

SELENE

Why did it stop?

THE TIME KEEPER

Because, there are no memories of what happens here in Eternity.

You will not have recollection of what happened except the memories you saw here.

SELENE

Oh. That's why your memories stopped as well.

The Time Keeper nods.

Selene looks down and flips to the end of her book. She realizes the rest pages of her book are blank.

SELENE

Wait... it's blank. Why can't I see more?

THE TIME KEEPER

Are you sure you want to do that?

Selene nods.

THE TIME KEEPER

I'm telling you once you do, there is no turning back. You know, only a few people have ever discovered my library and they have been greedy to know the future. I thought that a girl like you would know better.

SELENE

I just want to know what it holds.

The Time Keeper is taken aback. She didn't think Selene would be like all the others.

THE TIME KEEPER

All of it? My dear, once you see it, you will know exactly what is coming for you, when you meet the one, who your baby will be, all the big moments and the little ones too. Even what happens after this. There will be no surprises.

(beat.)

Are you sure?

SELENE

I am sure.

THE TIME KEEPER

Alright then.

Text suddenly appears on the page as her book grows in size, gaining chapters of life. The glowing book in front of her projects memories, flashing her life right in front of her. Moments with friends, marriage, birth, first steps, funerals, first day of school, graduations...

Then all of a sudden – **black.**

SELENE

What happened?

The Time Keeper has told this story few too many times.

THE TIME KEEPER

It's over.

A single tear falls down Selene's face.

SELENE

I didn't expect it to go by so fast...

THE TIME KEEPER

No one does.

The doors of Eternity open and reveal the library just as it was.

Selene leaves with a blank expression on her face. There is nothing more left for Selene to see or do. She knows everything that is going to happen or will happen, everything that has been said or will be said.

There's no more surprises.

The clock above the stage, that was once stopped, begins ticking once again – only now the hands have turned ahead and read 11:45 pm.

Just then, LUCAS (23), Selene's childhood friend walks in the room.

LUCAS

Hey!

Selene walks up and hugs Lucas. When she pulls back, she looks at every inch of his face – seeing him differently this time.

She sees him as her future husband and all the memories they will create together.

Lucas notices Selene seems a little off.

LUCAS

You okay?

SELENE

Yeah... just a late shift. I'm glad you're here, though.

LUCAS

Of course. Do you want to come to the MET? A few of us were going to see the new light show.

SELENE

Oh uh... yeah that sounds nice.

Selene checks her clock.

SELENE

Hey, what time is it?

LUCAS

(chuckles)

Why, you got somewhere you need to be?

SELENE

No, but I just feel like I just got here...

(beat.)

God. I didn't even really do my shift.

LUCAS

It's okay. You've got tomorrow.

(beat.)

Are you ready to go?

SELENE

Yeah, just let me grab my coat.

Selene puts on her coat and scarf, and heads out the door.

EXT. MET MUSEUM - NIGHT

Christmas lights adorn the square. Christmas carolers stand outside and a hot chocolate pop up stand had people standing in line.

LUCAS

Hey guys! We are here!

Lucas and Selene walk up to meet the group.

FRIENDS

(various greetings)

Hey! / Hi guys! / Oh my god hi!

All the friends exchange hugs.

Then, Lucas grabs something from inside his jacket.

LUCAS

Oh, also we wanted to surprise you
with a little something for your
first week starting at your dream
job.

Selene knows exactly what he is holding – a keychain with
389.2 on it.

She is touched.

SELENE

(distant)

Oh... thanks.

LUCAS

Are you okay? I thought you liked
surprises.

SELENE

Oh I do. They just don't feel the same anymore.

Lucas hands her the gift.

LUCAS

Well...

Selene unwraps the gift – the childhood excitement of mystery stripped from this moment.

SELENE

Oh Lucas, it's beautiful. Thank you.

LUCAS

I thought you'd like it.

Lucas spots the hot chocolate stand.

LUCAS

Do you wanna grab a hot chocolate?
On me.

SELENE

Sure. That sounds nice.

FADE TO BLACK.