

FLASH  
FICTION



PORTRAIT  
*of a Butterfly*

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## Portrait of a Butterfly

The facility is top-secret and very old, buried twelve stories underground in Russia under layer upon layer of security protocols still being dealt with by the rest of my father's team.

I drop, light as butterfly wings, from the oversized vent (a relic of older times before they learned that air ducts were a security breach just waiting to happen) and move across the floor as my father trained me, with a grace that would not disturb a petal or a leaf.

Butterfly.

Odd name for a guardian, they say. For a girl or even a lady, they can understand—but for a guardian?

I hack the coded safe—another skill drilled into me by my father, the current lead hunter of our House—and locate the

incriminating evidence. Three grainy photographs of a woman holding fire within her hands.

They say a butterfly in China can cause a hurricane in the Pacific.

I destroy the photographs and their faint ash remains, return the safe to locked and coded, and leap lightly onto the desk to climb my line back into the vent.

A guardian, like every hunter before me. A butterfly, flapping my wings.

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