The Chrono-Botanical

Thirteen-year-old Ada Lovelace II, great grandmother of Jacqueline Lovelace, frowned at the anomalous data on her punch cards, her mind fuzzing with confusion. Her ebony hair was scrunched into a tight bun along nape, creating an uncomfortable and irritating tinge crawl up her body. Her lined hands grasped the jaundiced, thinned parchment with the serpentine writing of the growth rate of the plant.

“How could this be?” Ada wondered. “Unless… - How is the growth rate of this plant so…impossible?”

As she examined the jaundiced paper of the plant’s growth rates, she felt a wave of realisation surge through her.

“Oh my gosh!” she exclaimed, “It isn’t growing fast, it’s skipping through time.”

The room was filled with dead silence, save for the dust motes that fluttered from the roof.

Zahi, a young Egyptian archaeological prodigy, traced the hieroglyphs with trembling, gnawed fingers, which had white traces of bites embedded on them. Behind him, out of his sight, a black mysterious silhouette in a barrette hat smiled coldly, snickering to himself as he reached for a telegram marked ‘Urgent: Temporal Breach Detected.”

On the dingy banks of Thames, Jack ‘the Ghost’ Sullivan, pocketed an unaware, elderly man who had a glowing seed gilded with gold. That night, he flickered his eyes open to find his damp and cramped room bristling with foliage.

“Blimey,” he gasped under his breath “This is impossible!”

Ada’s greenhouse shone with temporal energy, each plant a window to a different era.

“Remarkable,” whispered Nikola Tesla, the children’s unlikely mentor.”

The kids huddled together and watched in awe as Dr. Emilia Withers, a professional botanist, demonstrated the true power of chrono-flora, waving and swaying her hands in magnificent patterns.

Ada jolted awake, muttering herself. London covered in merciless flames, lighting up the sky as the Thames boiled dry. The flickering flames licked viciously at the defenceless sky as it crackled greedily.

“No,” she murmured, “that’s not how the great war is supposed to go.” She froze. Great war? Where did that come from? What was she thinking?

Jack stumbled towards them, his face pale and ashen with dread.

“It’s Emilia.” He gasped, “Sh – She’s trying to erase people from their existence, not just changing history!”

“How did you know that?” one of the chrono-botanists asked sceptically.

“Well, according to the timeline, I haven’t been born yet.”

Ada, interrupted, “Jack, I forgot who Emelia was…”

He paused, a confused expression permeating across his face.

“Oh no! It’s happening to me too.” He stammered with a worried voice.

They emerged from their hiding place, cornering Dr. Withers.

“Don’t you see? I can remake the world! No poverty, no war!” she cried.

Ada stepped up.

“We want it as normal.” Ada snapped, her mind still swelling with the ambiguousness of who Emilia was.

Dr Withers snarled stepping up to their faces and growling.

“You’ll see what I mean.” She threatened.

“No, Dr Withers, it will not go as you want it. At what cost? How many lives have you taken?”

For a moment, the fate itself hung in the balance as Dr Withers’ face tensed and she scrunched up her hands, trembling with rage.

“Don’t you want to have a perfect life. Think about it! No flaws, no problems, no anarchy!” she shrieked.

“Dr Withers, our passions, flaws, and our ability to choose - these are what makes us humans. Without these, our essence will be stripped away from us.” Ada stated.

Dr Withers’ face softened yet it still tingled with fury.

“I’ll not do it then.” She hissed. “But do not take this for granted, if you make mistake on your journey, I will not show anymore mercy for you, understand?”

They nodded, cautious about not making a wrong step in their journey ahead.