

The problem with perfect recall is that, eventually, one had to develop the ability to not have it just to save time on having to remember things.

It was an unorthodox approach to memory, but they were an unorthodox... person-thing-god, so it matched up as far as they were concerned. One couldn't be expected to remember everything that happened to oneself for the entirety of one's existence, down to the most minute detail, without having to stop at some point and wonder whether they shouldn't be sacrificing some things for the sake of convenience. Otherwise, one would have to spend more time trying to remember things than one would *doing* them, in a spiral of timewasting that would never end.

Plus, there was a *lot* of time there to *be* wasted, given their eternal nature. Whenever they could summon up the patience to trace their origin back to the point where they knew they popped into existence, they "knew", as much as anyone could know anything when one was a god, that they had a definitive beginning, even if they had no proper end in sight. They knew this beginning was so far back that even their perfect recall had some issues with pinpoint its exact position in time, and they knew, as much as they could, that they had always been like this.

Well, "this" being their particular form of growth. By its very nature, they hadn't always been as gargantuan as they were then, looking down at their garden of realities; there was once a point when they were small enough to fit within one universe, on *one* planet even. There were memories in their head of being inside *buildings* even, despite them having long-since transcended the ability to even *perceive* buildings in the first place.

And, despite their best efforts, these memories were as clear as the ones they formed in any given new instant, just as perfectly visible, just as vivid, just as *real* despite belonging to a version of themselves which existed in a universe that had been dead and buried for countless aeons. A million billion lifetimes lived, all of which resided within some remote corner of their brain's memory centres, leaving them to spend most of their days reminiscing about existences which no longer existed, on souls that had long-since been recycled into new lives, on adventures and tales that none would ever hear or experience again.

It was difficult sometimes. Their godlike status made it, if not easy, then at least tolerable for them to live their everyday "life", but on occasion, they would fall to bouts of ennui as they truly contemplated just what they were, *who* they were, and what all of this meant for themselves and the multiverse at large. There was even a time when they weren't a "god", *per se*; the power had always been there, but they had made a conscious decision *not* to use it, as clearly if they were *meant* to be gods, then reality would've made it as such from the beginning.

It took a long while before they came to terms with the idea that gods were *made*, not *born*, that one had to seize divinity for oneself and make of it what one wilt; that it was an exercise in

willpower and discipline, rather than just random happenstance... though, they *did* also need to see a few ascensions happen before this lesson got through their thick skull, what with them being *convinced* they were right. Or, perhaps, in need of being convinced, and lacking anyone but themselves to do so.

They were happy to let other people be gods at first. They themselves had already transcended the bounds of their original universe by the time anyone achieved apotheosis; such was the fate of someone whose powers were, at their core, the simple act of growth. They had never quite figured out whether or not the plethora of abilities that came afterwards had always been there, or if they were the direct result of them growing so much that reality gave up and let them have access to the control panel.

But the one constant *was* growth, that much they knew. It wasn't much, actually; the day-to-day changes were never measurable in any more than an inch or so, definitely not enough for it to be noticeable when their body was large enough to cast a shadow over universal clusters (metaphorically, there not being much light in the interstitial nothingness of the multiverse's "exterior"). They *had* been so drastic that, once they began, their stay in their original home universe didn't last long... at least, not in the grand scheme of things.

An inch a day was nothing. Even back then, their cosmos had been expanding at a far quicker pace, and while *eventually* they ran out of space to exist within their world, this meant very little when compared to the totality of existence itself. They had once felt cramped, back when their body eventually reached a point where it could no longer be *on* the planet they used to call home; they used to feel like they would never have enough room, in their inexorable march outwards, in their unrelenting advance upon reality itself.

As they grew, however, so too did the dawning realisation that, ultimately, they were very little, if anything, compared to the sum total of existence. They could grow an inch a day for a million years and it wouldn't really mean that much; hells below, they could grow an inch a day for the entirety of a universe's lifespan and they still wouldn't occupy a *fraction* of that universe's size, which was precisely what ended up happening to their original cosmos.

They had spent *aeons* in the darkness. Once the stars went out and nothing reigned but the occasional black hole swimming in the vast emptiness, long after the last of them evaporated in showers of matter that rivalled Big Bangs, yet were absorbed by the nothingness just as quickly, they had naught but themselves. Still growing an inch a "day", for all that days even mattered anymore, still as immune to the ravages of time as they always had been. They'd seen civilizations rise and fall, they'd helped a few along the way, they watched as their universe slowly, but inevitably, died... leaving only them behind as proof that anything ever lived in the first place.

Yet, they were still alive. Despite everything, their soul still burned, not so much a flickering flame as a vast and powerful beacon in the dark, beckoning any who might be around to come towards them and experience some measure of companionship. Maybe, they remembered thinking, another entity like them existed, far away where they would take an eternity to approach, and another infinity to interact... but still there. They had nothing but time now, in the sense that things happened in a somewhat linear fashion.

But none came. Despite calling for uncountable millenia, there was nothing but themselves, there, in the great and vast emptiness of whatever counted for a post-universe, leaving them... mostly bored. They were eternal, was the thing, and knew it; they'd known it for a long while, and thus weren't exactly worried about losing their lives whenever their instance of reality stopped existing in whatever fashion would take place. It was around that time that the full weight of it all came crashing down on them, and their epiphany, long held back their unwillingness to accept their own divine status, knocked at the door and refused to leave.

They still refused to accept their godly nature, but at the very least, were willing to compromise and roll with the punches when it came to their eternity. They were only gaining an inch a day, sure... but they weren't going to run out of days. Eventually, their cosmos would cease being, dissolving into whatever was beyond it, and when that day came, *they* would still be there, still growing an inch every twenty-four hours or so, still being, still present, still waiting for things to happen.

It took a while. A long enough while that it still stuck out in their long-term memory as the longest they had ever waited for anything to happen. So long that, when the first inklings of a new universe began to coalesce, when another great explosion was being prepared through the completely random fluctuations of a background nothing that *wasn't* actually a nothing, they had grown large enough to not see it. Lacking a visual reference, it was easy to lose track of how much size they had gained over that unholy amount of time spent floating in the void; by the time a new instance of reality was conceived, they believed themselves the size of a few galaxies, only to realise that "dot" they were seeing *was* the new universe, directly after its cataclysmic birth.

Sure, it wasn't as large as her old universe had been back when she began growing, but it was still *a universe*, and expanding quickly enough that it would likely be another step in the eternal recurrence of reality. Yet, despite it accelerating outwards at a speed too great for them to understand, it was still... tiny. A dot. An insignificant, tiny little dot, one that would *someday* grow to encompass them, in a distant day that was not that one. It was there that they truly understood just how gargantuan they were, and just how powerful their simple trick actually was.

There came a point where this second universe became large enough to rival them for size, and when that happened, it was easy enough for it to become so incomprehensibly huge that, for the first time in almost literally forever, they felt small again. Yet, this reality was not for them; while they were still capable of peering into it to some extent, its laws were fundamentally incompatible with the kind of life they were, forever barring them from directly intervening within it.

Yet, it was still *something*, and far more than they'd ever had in so long that they'd almost forgotten it. So they watched, from start to finish, as this second reality unfurled before them: from its inception to the first galaxies to the first planets to the first life to the first civilisation, all of it observed in the most minute of details, leaving nothing behind for them to not know; the sum total of all knowledge and information contained within this new reality was theirs to know and absorb, and with it, they entertained themselves until this new universe, too, began to grow old.

It, too, fizzled out, though in a different manner to the first one, as its laws were such that it collapsed back in on itself rather than just expand until there was literally nothing anywhere but the most infinitesimal differences in quantum fluctuations to make for poor company. And thus were they plunged back into the darkness, until one day, a second bubble of light, a *third* universe, was born somewhere "above" them, giving them yet another thing to look forward to.

It was this third iteration that spawned the first god. A warrior by nature, they had sought fame and fortune at the head of a slave rebellion, leading their way through the greatest empire their world had known so far, at the forefront of *millions* of freed captives; revolution after revolution followed in his wake, as he put his oppressors to the sword and freed those bound by shackle of unjust law, leaving behind a better, *fairer* world that would eventually come to see him as its liberator and forefather.

It was an interesting process to watch: from the man's death, and his soul's subsequent coalescence outside the bounds of his universe rather than its recycling into new life, to the power it syphoned from his worshippers still within that reality. *They* watched it all, as this new form of life, born not out of slow and steady growth, but explosive adoration, was born from naught, resulting in a birth so disastrously energetic that they, the sole inhabitants of the void beyond, had to actually blink thanks to the flash.

Behind it was left *him*, the first "true" god created by a universe... and one who was incredibly surprised to see someone already waiting for him out there, believing himself to have been called up to serve a pantheon that, in truth, had never existed. Hard to make conversation as well; the two were a couple of universes apart, and with so much more information to draw from, the bigger of the two simply couldn't see this new divinity as... that much different than anyone

else. Even that different from themselves, really; making polite conversation was tremendously hard under such awkward circumstances.

Thankfully, the new god took care of that, being far too busy handling his worshippers to concern himself with the titan looming in the blackness behind him. He did his best, occasionally slipping up before trying to fix his blunders, sometimes smiting someone who maybe-kinda deserved it. He made it almost to the end of his civilisation before deciding that his work was done, sending his soul back to the universe it came from so it could be reincarnated into a new mortal, one who would never know of their divine heritage. And leaving *them* to watch, once more alone, as the cycle of reality carried on without them.

The next three gods were much of the same. As were the half a dozen or so universes that came after that one, as well as *their* divinities, reality itself apparently hardwired to handle more of them as it went along. The first true pantheon, the first collection of formerly-mortal souls that joined together to create a *group* of deities, came at around the same time as the original titan observed more than two universes coexisting; the tropes and ideas from both of those by-then tiny bubbles were made to mix together, leading to something of a shared group of divinities who ruled over their own particular aspect in both realities.

They eventually went back as well, as did their universes return to primordial nothingness. And there was them, still, growing at their slow and unrelenting pace, wondering how long it would be until they couldn't even *see* universes anymore. So much time had passed that they couldn't count it; literally so, as the time it would take to do so, even for them, would make the timer inaccurate by several orders of magnitude. They could float there and count up from their birth and, by the time they were done, another few universes would've gone by, and they would've missed all the fun!

Gods came and went, souls were made to return to other universes after death, as the number of simultaneously extant realities steadily climbed. They were still there, watching it all take place, as the blackness that surrounded them for so long was made to light up, the energies of countless realities seeping into the background of meta-reality, giving them a good look over their body for the first time in... well, again, they couldn't know.

But it was not *them*, as much as any group of atoms made up a thing. They existed, but that was about it; trying to pin down what form of life they were had become an exercise in futility, and going any further than that was, quite frankly, a waste of time. It took them until the thousandth or so universe until they *finally* relented and accepted the mantle of protector deity; by then, *so many* other gods had outright begged for them to do so that it had become something of a tradition, carried on by souls that ascended multiple times without realising it.

But they were still there... so obviously, they should at least put in some effort to make sure that things ran properly. An inch a day for *however long* they were around added up to them being so gargantuan that most other gods could no longer perceive even a fraction of their size, leading to some rather awkward situations where lesser divinities had to pray to *them* in the hopes they would listen. Awkward, because they couldn't hear; they had appointed themselves as a god, but that didn't mean they suddenly gained magical listening powers.

Still, they did their best. Nudging universes away from one another, making sure they existed for as long as possible, guiding new gods down the proper paths so they didn't accidentally cause wars because of poorly-written, ambiguous doctrine, the works. And in the middle of it all, still growing, still as slowly as before, compounded over the ages as the multiverse was gradually built up from nothingness, careening towards... not an end.

They didn't know how they knew it, but they were aware of it in some bizarre, subconscious manner: while individual universes did definitely end, this collection of them was only getting bigger as time went on; the underlying fabric of it was sturdy, enough so that even they couldn't touch it, enough so that, even long past the point where they stopped existing, such an *unfathomably* long time away that it could hardly be said to even come to pass, the multiverse would still be going.

They had witnessed the birth of it... and it was pretty neat. Not much else they could think of it as; not much else they could think of, period, given that the wonders they had bore witness too were such that nothing really compared... even to itself, after a while. It was a paradoxical state of being, and one they weren't quite sure how to address, but in the meantime, while they still *were*, why not enjoy themselves? Why not slow down a bit, pay attention to *one* universe, then go back to ruling it all before doing something else for fun?

There was a wide multiverse out there. And they were still growing.