

2022-07-14 Cathedral

"Our Father, who art in ..."

Every morning, Mrs. Clavell came to pray at the old abandoned church in her finest black cotton dress. She was alone in the cathedral-shaped tombstone.

The shadow-drenched ceiling never lit up with song. Skewed wood boards, barely nailed in place, cast shadows where once shown backlit scenes of saints.

Back in the church's dying days, the congregation had planned a constant vigil. The court order said they were to shutter the doors 'after the last service on Sunday, June 4th.' Mrs. Clavell had spearheaded the plan to simply have that last service never end. She had fallen in love with her church from her first moment as a choir-girl years ago. The space simply could never be allowed pass away.

The choir had taken shifts, the pastors napped in the pews, and a few faithful of the congregation joined in to pray throughout this filibuster. No one noticed when that vigil ended. Mrs. Clavell had been off-duty for the night, but she found the front door the next morning boarded up.

Mrs. Clavell did what any sensible person would do. She brought out her pliers, pulled out the nails, and went in to pray anyway. So long ago, she couldn't even recall the date.

The cathedral was now condemned, but to purgatory not inferno. Sluggish city bureaucracy had staid that final judgement.

In mourning, Mrs. Clavell maintained the vigil on her own, knowing this ritual was what kept the building upright, and city paperwork stalled.

This particular day, however, was special. It was June 4th. A small candle brightened up the nave. And for a moment, the only moment she lived in, Mrs. Clavell saw the light, heard the music, and knew her church lived as long as she was there for it.