

Interior — Deep in the Palace of Collections. Dim amber light pulses through veins of memory-glass. Torm's father stands before the half-built dream machine, torn and exhausted. The Queen's voice coils around him like silk over steel.)

QUEEN OF COLLECTIONS

You're so close, Doctor. The machine hums with potential—its heart flickers like a newborn sun. But you stall. Why? Is it fear? Or that laughable whisper of morality still clinging to your ribs like a parasite?

You built this for her. For your little prodigy. For the child with fire in her veins and numbers in her lullabies. But what did the world give her in return? Jealousy. Isolation. A sickness in the sister she tried to save.

The world deserves no mercy. Only order. Only vision. *Your* vision.

With your machine, I could thread dreams like yarn through every mind in the provinces. No more wars, no more disobedience, no more chaos. I would end the age of wandering thought—and shape a future that kneels.

You *owe* this world structure. You owe your daughter the throne she was denied. Or would you rather her brilliance rot in a wooden village while her dreams dry up with the rivers?

Finish the machine, Doctor. Not for me. For *legacy*. For the empire your bloodline was born to command.

(MORE)

QUEEN OF COLLECTIONS (cont'd)
Do this... or be remembered as a coward
in a story written by survivors.
