

“Okay so it’s... Room 406B...” I said softly as I looked down at my phone, telling me my room number. I’m on the fourth floor of what would be my new home for the next few years of my life, now I just have to find the right room. As I walk through the halls, passing by rooms 403, 404 and 405, I eventually find my room. I take the key out from my dress pocket and unlock the door. I enter the common room before looking to my left and seeing a giant B on one of the two doors that stood before me. I drag my luggage up to it and take the door handle in my hand. I notice that the door is already unlocked, meaning that my roommate must be inside already. To be quite honest, I wasn’t expecting this, but nothing ventured nothing gained as the saying goes.

I open the door and walk inside with my luggage. Inside I see a woman in a purple dress with blonde hair already unpacking her suitcase into the drawers. She turns around and I could immediately tell that she isn’t Japanese. My suspicions were only confirmed when she spoke to me with a slight accent. “Ah, hello there! You must be my roommate.” She says, walking up to me and extending her hand out for me to shake. Despite the accent she has, her Japanese is really good!

I grab her hand and gave it a firm shake. “Heya, it’s nice to meet you! To be honest with ya, I wasn’t expecting to have a foreign exchange student as my roommate. But my name is Renko Usami regardless!” I introduce, giving the woman before me a slight bow.

The woman giggles and bows as well. “I’m Maribel Hearn. The email you got should’ve told you the name of the roommate you were going to get as well as your room number.” The foreigner told me with a soft smile.

“Really? It did? I never saw it...” I answered honestly, looking down at my phone and scrolling through the email. Turns out she was right, and that her name was right there written in Katakana. My jaw drops as I realized how hard her name is to pronounce. “Well uh... seems like you were right ahahaha... so uh... Ma...Maerebe...” I stammered out, trying to figure out how to properly pronounce it.

The woman giggles before me in such a way that caused me to blush, not from embarrassment but from how cute her laugh was. “You can just call me Merry if you wish. I know how hard it is to pronounce in Japanese.” She reassured me. I breathed a sigh of relief as she was understanding about the situation.

“Thank you, I was really scared I would be giving you a bad first impression of me.” I laughed off my nervousness and started to unpack my belongings.

Merry turns back around to finish unpacking herself. “Don’t worry about that. I can’t judge a person solely based off of their appearances and my first conversation with them. That just wouldn’t be fair to either party.” She told me. Thank god she was so kind. I can tell that Merry and I will be getting along just fine this semester. “So Renko, what’s your major?” She asked me curiously.

“Astrophysics!” I answered without a moment’s hesitation. I wince to myself at how fast I was in answering the question only to hear Merry hum happily.

“Really now? That’s my major too! Though I do want to get into Quantum Physics too!” She said excitedly.

At that moment, it felt like I wasn’t talking to a stranger but a good friend. “Oh really? That’s so awesome! I love Quantum Physics! Okay so... I want to know. What are your thoughts on String Theory?” I ask. This was a bit of a loaded question if I’m to be quite honest myself but I just had to know if she shared my opinion on the matter.

“Oh god don’t get me started on String Theory. While I do believe it to be true, it’s way too complicated for it’s own good. Because you have to have knowledge on so many other different Quantum theories to even come close to somewhat understanding it. I’m hoping I’m able to understand it at least a little bit by the time I graduate.” Merry ranted.

“I KNOW RIGHT!!!” I shouted with enthusiasm. “It’s so good to finally meet someone who both loves and hates string theory! Everyone I’ve talked to either loves it, hates it or has no idea what it is!”

“Well it’s not like string theory is something you can just casually bring up to someone at a bar.” Merry giggled as she sits on her bed and faces towards me while I do the same. “Do you believe the universe to be infinite in size?”

“Well yeah, I do! Not only is it expanding constantly towards infinity, it also has to be big enough to fit Amitabha, who is stated to be 6×10^{125} yojana tall. Converting that to meters, he would be 4.2×10^{126} meters tall! And that isn’t even considering his width, mass or anything!” I rambled like an excited child talking to their friend about their cool Christmas gift.

Merry gives me a curious look as I rambled. “Oh? I didn’t know you were Buddhist.” She said.

“Eh technically I’m not. I just personally believe all religions and myths are real.” I explained to her. This caught her attention.

“Oh really? I’ve never met someone who believes all religions and myths are real.” She answered earnestly.

“Well, with a mind like mine, it’s easy to believe!” I said with confidence. “There are so many stories out there that explains the natural phenomena of this world from so many different cultures. I feel that the faith of these people made these gods, demons and youkai real!”

“Then how do you believe the universe was truly created then? Was it the Big Bang Theory? Or was it from some deity?”

“Personally, I believe all answers are correct. It’s hard to explain in words but... imagine it being something similar to how universes converge onto one another. Take Ancient Greece for example. As far as they were concerned, they had no idea about other cultures existing besides what was around them. It’s like what if a tree fell in the woods and no one is around to hear it, does it truly make a sound? Well if the people of Ancient Greece didn’t know about other cultures like Japan or Africa, then do those places truly exist?” I explained.

“Hmmm, I think I see what you mean. So you’re saying all these cultures were created by their own individual deities which then merged into each other as humanity started discovering more of the world.” Merry asks.

“Something similar to that yeah! Again, it’s really hard to explain what I mean. I hope that with me going to this school, I’ll be able to put it into words properly.” I told her with a laugh.

“Well, when you’re able to properly explain your theory, I would love to hear it. I’ve always had a soft spot for religion and mythology.” Merry said with a smile.

“Then it’s a good thing you’re my roommate! You’ll be hearing more and more of my theories!” I told her happily. I can tell that this is the start of a beautiful friendship.