

TALES FROM THE OTHER PLACE
E2: THE CONSTANT

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EXT. A POLICE STATION, NIGHT

Late night. The streets are empty. Inside a police station, a joyful gathering goes on.

NARRATOR

I was first introduced to the Norfolk case 15 years ago, as I was being promoted to chief of the station.

In the corner, an aging CHIEF says something to the Narrator, a middle-aged police officer. They quietly exit the room.

INT. NARRATOR'S OFFICE

The Chief closes the door behind the Narrator. As the Narrator takes his seat, the Chief produces a small folder and places it on the Narrator's desk.

NARRATOR

It was presented to me by the retiring chief, neatly packed into an aging manila folder that seemed to have never been touched.

The Narrator examines the folder.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A hand-me-down, passed through generations of police chiefs who couldn't do anything about it.

The Chief takes a seat across from the Narrator. He quietly sips his drink as the Narrator looks at the envelope.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

"There's no crime," the chief said. "Nothing to do about it. We're just monitoring the situation. As it develops," he added with a hesitant pause, as if to reassure me that this was something that could not be solved. Something to keep in the drawer to calm the noisy relatives who came to inquire about the case. Something to silence those thoughts about a case with no solutions and no problems.

The Narrator opens the envelope. A single, dated piece of newspaper falls out. It reads: "NORFOLK: WHERE TIME DOES NOT REACH?"

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The folder contained only a single slip of paper. A newspaper notice, dated from 1805, about the tale of a town frozen in time. It was what there was, and all that ever will be.

INT. STATION EXTERIOR, DAY

The Narrator gets into a car with some other officers. They drive off.

NARRATOR

I took a drive down to Norfolk along with some officers.

We follow the car through more and more rural roads. Cars grow less apparent as the journey progresses. A YOUNG OFFICER looks out the window curiously.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

We passed through highways into freeways into unmaintained dirt roads. Gave the impression that everything and everyone wanted to forget the existence of this place.

The Narrator's gaze follows an upside-down horse-drawn carriage on the side of the road.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It was not meant to be.

EXT. NORFOLK MAIN STREET

A small Western town. People stand still, drinks and guns in hand. Horse-drawn carriages line the street, fog still being emitted from horses' noses. Norfolk is a town frozen in time.

The car passes slowly through it.

NARRATOR

We passed through the main street, making our way through people stuck in place, horse carriages forever remaining in a perpetual turn.

The Narrator looks at a young mother, baby in hand, halfway out a window, waving to someone offscreen. He tries to find that person, but cannot. He looks at the other officers, face down, grim. He follows suit.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

We didn't stop. We didn't need to.
As the people before me, there was
nothing to stop for. There was
nothing to do here.

TIMELAPSE- NARRATOR'S OFFICE

A timelapse over tens of years. The Narrator spending many sleepless nights at the desk working. Awards being placed up. The office gradually becoming more modern. A renovation at some point.

NARRATOR

The years went by. The arrow of
time, the constant, moved forward,
and so did we. The case gradually
slipped from my mind into a
recessant memory, the natural order
of things.

EXT. NORFOLK MAIN STREET

The aged Narrator drives some young officers through the main street. They chat amongst each other. He spots the mother again. This time he knows where to look. He sees a carriage falling over. He looks back to the mother, and sees that she is pointing, not waving.

NARRATOR

Sometimes people would ask. I would
tell. The curious would actually
want to see for themselves. I took
them. They went back home,
satisfied, and the memory would
slip as does the memory of a dinner
a fortnight ago. Norfolk would
always be there. It wouldn't
change, unlike anything in this
world. No need to revisit what does
not need revisiting.

EXT. A POLICE STATION, NIGHT

A similar party to the first scene. The station has been renovated. There are more modern cars on the street. There is more activity, too- the town has grown.

NARRATOR

I retire soon, and I will be passing on my position to a younger, more experienced member of society.

INT. THE POLICE STATION, NIGHT

The Narrator stands in a corner, surrounded by other older officers. He's looking at the NEW CHIEF in the middle of the room, surrounded by celebrating officers.

INT. NARRATOR'S OFFICE

The Narrator closes the door behind him. The New Chief is sitting in the narrator's chair. The Narrator produces the folder. The New Chief excitedly takes the folder and opens it. He reads the article inside.

NARRATOR

Maybe there will be a spark of renewed interest in the Norfolk case, but it will be a brief burst of energy that will surely fade into the darkness of the past as all things do. Norfolk presents no questions, and it surely does not answer any of the present ones. It is a constant, unmoving, unchanging for eternity, a figment infinitely suspended in the current of time. It has no purpose, and it never will.

The Narrator excuses himself and goes back outside.

INT. THE POLICE STATION, NIGHT

The Narrator looks around. A few young officers are making a commotion. They point. The Narrator follows. They're pointing at a drunk officer, who trips and falls.

NARRATOR

So I'll do the only thing I can, the only thing the rest of us can do. A liberty that the people in Norfolk don't have. I move on.