Singularity

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Look up in time

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by Vincent Tan

I recently watched a movie called "In Time". In that world, all human beings are engineered such that they will reach the age of 25 and then stop aging. The downside? You get only one more year to live. And on your left arm, a ticking clock constantly reminds you of how much time you have to live in glowing green numbers.

In that world, all currency becomes time. You buy food with time. You pay for a bus trip with time. You get paid with time. Your life in terms of time becomes both your wealth and how long you live.

The richest seemingly live forever, with centuries of life and wealth on them. The poor live day by day, literally.

There's this incident in the movie that stood out. The hero of the movie somehow got a century of time from a generous centenarian. The centenarian wasn't so much generous as he was tired of living. Death was why life was precious. He literally gave his life to the hero.

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The hero, with his newfound wealth, wanted to help his close friend. He gave that friend 10 years. Remember that the poor live almost day by day. They make enough to continue to live for maybe another few days. A decade of life (and wealth) is a fortune.

Unfortunately, that close friend immediately went to drink himself to death. With 9 years still on him. A sobering thought on how some people are unable to cope with sudden wealth.

Which brings us to another point. That ticking clock of yours just means you die when it goes to zero. It doesn't mean you can't die by other means. It's why the rich never do anything risky (physically speaking). Unless one is incredibly stupid, the rich will never die. The rich are scared to do anything new, because it might be risky.

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But the one lesson I took away was that the hero never stopped fighting to live. An hour here. 2 days there. He donates 5 minutes of his time to a little girl (holding a time capsule which stores time, which is the equivalent of a piggy bank). There's a phrase he said.

"You can do a lot in one day."

You may be weighed down with your troubles. Things may not be working well for you. Don't look down in despair. Look up with hope. More importantly, look up in time. There's still time.

What would you do and feel differently if you only had months left? Weeks? Days?

You can do a lot in one day.

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